THE EVANGELICAL BELIEVER's CONFESSION OF THE SON OF GOD;

OR,

CHRIST ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL.

ACCORDING TO THE TRUE SPIRITUAL INTENTION;

AS HELD FORTH IN THE PATTERN GIVEN BY HIMSELF,

VIZ.

BAPTISM, THE LORD'S SUPPER, LAYING ON OF HANDS,
ATTENTION TO THE WORD OF TRUTH,
PRAISE and THANKS-GIVING PRAYER and SUPPLICATION,
FASTING, KEEPING THE LORD'S SABBATH.

By JOHN JOHNSON,
Author of the RICHES OF GOSPEL GRACE OPENED; and A SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME.

JOH. X. 27.

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THE *Author of theſe pages does not expect that this, or any thing he can publiſh, will be acceptable to the religious world. For the time is come, when they will not endure ſound doctrine. Religion is become a mere ceremony among all denominations, governed by cuſtom and faſhion, as much as dreſs, behaviour, or any other wordly thing. And in general it does not appear, as if God was in all their thoughts; for if any man pays due attention to the word of the God of truth, ſo as to tread in the ſteps of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, he makes himſelf the object of their deriſion, deteſtation and utter rejection.*

If any man ſhews ſo much regard to the word of the living God, as to diſregard the traditions of men, and not to pay deference to their pious teachers, famous doctors, and celebrated outhors; they accuſe him of pride, and ſelf-conceit.

If he cannot leave the teſtimony of God to follow the multitude, and walk in the common beaten path of profeſſors; they cry out, whimſies, oddities, fancies of his own, &c.

If he cannot relinquiſh the divine truth, which the Holy Ghoſt has clearly teſtified in the holy ſcriptures; they cry out, over-poſitive, dogmatical, obſtinate, &c.

If he maintains the true goſpel, in the riches of its excellency, grace and glory; then their cry is, arrogancy, ſtrange notions, high flights, &c.

If he keeps cloſe to the doctrine of Chriſt, in the ſpirit and truth, life and power, they complain, theſe are hard ſayings, who can hear them?

If he points out any of the innovations, or anti-chriſtian-doctrines, commonly held among profeſſors, and ſhews them to be of men and not of God; they cry out, too much acrimony, too much of his own ſpirit!

If he cannot acknowledge any doctrines, practices, or imaginary experience to be of God, which have no foundation in the word of the goſpel of grace; they reproach him with contracted notions, narrow ſpiritedneſs, &c.

If he cannot addreſs ſinners in general as if they were all believers, and encourage them to go forward in the kingdom of God, even when they have never received the goſpel, to introduce them into that kingdom, and call upon them, and exhort them (while dead in treſpaſſes and ſins) to perform works of ſpirit and life; they ſound it abroad, that he cannot preach to ſinners, has nothing to ſay to ſinners, &c.

If he attempts to diſtinguiſh between the faith of the operation of God, held forth in the goſpel, and the counterfeits of ſatan, upon the carnal mind, commonly encouraged by miniſters; they ſay, he makes the hearts of the righteous ſad, and ſtumbles weak minds by diſtinctions of his own.

If he cannot ſoothe perſons in their vain imaginations, to think, that every friſk of fancy that comes in their heads, or whirlwind of paſſion that agitates the mind, is a ſpiritual operation from whence they may conclude themſelves to be chriſtians, they accuſe him, that he tramples on the work of the Spirit, and denies the experience of the children of God.

If he cannot allow any to be in a ſtate of ſalvation unleſs they have been called by the goſpel of the grace of God, are born of God, live by the faith of the Son of God, and bear

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ſome reſemblance to the Holy One; they cry out, O harſh, cenſorious! uncharitable doctrine! raſh judgment! &c. &c.

If he cannot admit that Regeneration, or the Heavenly calling, conſiſts in a chimerical dream, produced by ſome unintelligible operation, extatick agitation, or ſudden impulſe on the mind; but inſiſts that the ſoul is born of God by the clear diſtinct light of the goſpel of Chriſt, under the ſpecial power of the ſpirit of life; whereby the underſtanding is opened, the affections quickened, and the will melted into an humble ſubmiſſion to drink in the fulneſs of the life of Jeſus; and all the faculties of the ſoul are ſpiritually united to the ſon of God, or all the intellectual powers are filled with the light, life, love and truth as it is in Jeſus. Then they cry out, that he makes no allowance for weak chriſtians; that he makes no diſtinction between new-born babes and full-grown believers.

But foraſmuch as the teſtimony of the ſpirit of truth in the oracles of divine grace; makes a clear diſtinction between the young breathings of the new-born babe, in Chriſt, and the old ſwelling imaginations of the carnal mind: It is to be humbly hoped there are a few to be found, who are willing to attend to the diſtinction between the language of the Chriſt of God, and the deluſive teachings of men.

PREFACE.

To the genuine Diſciples of the true MESSIAH;

The enſuing Lines are devoutely dedicated.

TO them who utterly explode all human tradition; and entirely relinquiſh all manner of doctrines (reſpecting heavenly things) but that alone, which is contained in the written oracles of God. Which may be depended on, as the very truth of the Lord of glory; being the infallible record of the ſpirit of holineſs.

To them whoſe hearts are devoted, to learn, underſtand, and embrace, the truth and life of that ſacred word, In its whole extent, as it relates to the counſel and glory of God; and in its true Intent, as it is directed to our very heart and ſoul: and as it is adapted to guide our Minds, into the excellency of the Knowledge of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt.

To them that cry day and night, to the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; to bleſs them with the ſpirit of his beloved ſon: to open their underſtandings, to take away the vail of carnal-mindedneſs, from their hearts; and guide them into the light and life, ſpirit and truth, power and glory, of the goſpel of his grace. That they may

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be repleniſhed with the ſpecial bleſſings of his love: and all their mental powers may enter into the abundant fulneſs of the kingdom of God, and of his Chriſt.

WITHOUT theſe three things, no man can be a diſciple of Jeſus, nor can he enter into the kingdom of Heaven; nor attend to the commandments of the Lord; nor confeſs the Son of God in truth.

THESE, the Lord of glory has deeply impreſſed, upon all his diſciples.—*Call no man your Father upon earth.*——*Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtify of me.—He ſpake a parable unto them, to this end, That men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*—In theſe three ſteps, every ſoul is led, whom the Father draws to the Son. And to ſuch it is, the following ſheets are addreſſed.

THE vain world, who ſeek their portion in the things of this preſent life; whether they be great or little, learned or unlearned, polite or vulgar, wiſe or unwiſe, active or indolent, ſober or profligate; they do not pay regard to theſe things. The moraliſts, who truſt in the uprightneſs of their lives, whether it be the regularity, order, and decency of their behaviour; or it be their negative righteouſneſs, as innocency, or having done no hurt; or their poſitive righteouſneſs, as virtue, or having done good: theſe do not ſeek the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. The religious, who think to pleaſe God with their devotion; whether zealouſly following human ſupeſtitions; fervently attending to ſome particular precepts, or favourite points, gathered from the ſcriptures; devoutly

devoutly performing ſome taſks, which they have deviſed, and impoſed on themſelves; or taking ſatisfaction from ſome pathetick agitations, extatick raptures, or energy of the mind, in their devotion; theſe are not ſeeking the holy one of God, in truth. They that imagine they know God; either from the common notions and ſentiments of men, in general; from the accuteneſs of their own wit; from the wiſdom learned in ſchools; or in any viſionary, or enthuſiaſtick way; none of theſe knows the true God. They that pretend to faith; either as a natural operation, wrought by their own endeavours; who join good works with faith, in juſtification; whoſe faith lives upon frames, feelings, and good diſpoſitions; whoſe faith receives its life from their works; whoſe faith depends on impulſes, ſudden impreſſions, or ſomething immediately darted into the mind, whoſe faith is only a ſtrong preſumption fermented through the power of imagination; or whoſe faith is only a dead faith, conſiſting in opinion or ſpeculation, without the living fruits of love, humility, repentance, obedience, and holy converſation, none of theſe knows or truly believes on the Son of God. The Myſtick, who under pretence of ſpiritualizing, turns all the word of God into fancy and conjecture; paying more attention to the imaginations of his own brain, than to the true concord of divine revelation, or the light which one part of ſcripture gives to another; ſo confounding the natural things with the ſpiritual, that the truth of both is loſt; for the natural things being perverted, the ſpiritual things which thoſe natural things were intended to illuſtrate, are obſcured; theſe never did behold the goſpel in ſpirit and life. The ſophiſt, who goes about to invent, or propogate new doctrines or ſyſtems in divinity, or to

maintain

maintain ſome peculiar opinions by forcing his own unnatural gloſſes on the ſacred truths contained in the ſcripture; theſe do not ſeek the truth, as it is in Jeſus. The Arminians, who repreſent the goſpel as a new or mitigated law; propoſing grace upon certain terms, or conditions to be performed by the creature; or to be obtained by the power, and free will of man: and this grace, when thus obtained, having its dependance on the creature's virtue, is liable to be loſt any day: So that God not being all in all, it neither brings true glory to God, nor true conſolation to the ſoul: theſe are ſtrangers to the riches of ſovereign grace: *The Calviniſts, who profeſs to believe, and receive the rich ſovereign grace that is in Chriſt, but confound and darken it, by attempting to explain it by logical arguments; and to define it by the ſophiſtry of ſchools and ſynods; mixing the glorious truth of the goſpel, with the doctrines of men, and the ſeductions of devils. The God of perfect love and infinite holineſs, they repreſent, as being the original cauſe of all ſin and miſery. He that gives commandments, admonitions, warnings, threatenings to prevent his creatures from ſinning; yea, perſuades, and laments over them, with the ſtrongeſt aſſeverations, that it is what his ſoul hates and grieves him at his heart; they repreſent this God of truth, as making thoſe very ſins unavoidable by his decree. The God of abſolute, infinite, eternal, immutable perfection; they repreſent, as incapable of bringing his counſels of grace and glory to maturity, without the intervention of ſin: The Sovereign Lord of Glory, the ultimate delight of the Father, the eſſential word of the living God, who is before all things, and by whom all things conſiſt; they repreſent as being brought forth in conſequence of ſin, and in ſubſerviency

* in Yorkſhire & Lancaſhire

ſubſerviency thereto; or, as if ſin was the cauſe of his incarnation and glorification. Chriſt, who came in our very nature, made of a woman, of the ſeed of David, in all things made like his brethren; without which he could not have been a mediator: they repreſent, as coming into the world in a nature different to all mankind; foraſmuch as he came in a nature perfect pure, but all the reſt they affirm, come into the world in the deepeſt pollution. He that is called, *the laſt Adam*, who came to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and reſtore what the firſt Adam loſt; they repreſent, as having only brought in a partial reſtitution and left a great part of mankind eternally to periſh under the firſt ſin. They repreſent the *One God* as having two wills: the one revealed, and the other ſecret; with the former, willing the ſalvation and happineſs of all his creatures; but with the latter, willing the inevitable damnation and eternal miſery of the greateſt part of mankind. The Holy Spirit, whom the goſpel holds forth as operating in the light of the word of truth; they repreſent as operating by himſelf in the dark, regenerating ſouls without the light of the word, or without the knowledge of the Son of God. The ſpirit of truth, who is promiſed to abide with believers for ever, they repreſent as an uncertain viſitor, now preſent, now abſent; now appearing, now diſappearing; like an *Ignis Fatuus*. The moral law was adapted to our nature, and in man's power to keep; and tho' man has loſt that power by revolting from God, it is ſtill a righteous thing in God to require obedience: But they ſay, that God requires natural men to perform ſpiritual acts, ſuch as never were in man's power: That faith which is of the operation of God, and the gift of God, of which Chriſt is author and finiſher; they repreſent as the act and duty of man, and ſay, God requires

quires us to believe with that faith on pain of damnation. The faith, by which the believer lives on the ſon of God, is juſtified, ſanctified, ſtands, walks, overcomes the world, and has acceſs to the Father, by Jeſus Chriſt. this they repreſent as an uncertain chimera: the perſon may not know whether he enjoys it, or not. Yea, I ſcarce know any individual truth of Chriſt, which calviniſts profeſs to acknowledge; but in the repeating, making mention, or the mode in which it is expreſſed; they either drop that which is the very life, where the true emphaſis lies; or they vary the expreſſion, from the words of the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſcripture; whereby the ſpirit and truth, life and glory, is concealed: or they unite ſome damnable hereſy along with it; by which it's ſenſe is perverted, it's glory tarniſhed, and it's excellency depreciated. Theſe people are ſo revetted in the traditions of men, ſo ſtiffened in their own conceits, and they ſo harden one another therein; That they cannot ſubmit to receive the kingdom of God as little children, from the pure goſpel of the grace of God.

Now my dearly beloved brethren, whoſoever you are; or whereſoever you may be found: *Which worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.* To you I write theſe things. To ſtir you up, by way of remembrance; and to awake your attention; that you may not ſleep as do others: but that you may watch againſt the ſtrong deluſions, which the ſons of Antichriſt have introduced, and are introducing, to pervert the goſpel, and beguile unſtable ſouls. That you may be fortified againſt all the policy of the gates of Hell, the ſtratagems of the Prince of Darkneſs, and aſ-

ſaults of the wicked one. That you be not toſſed to and fro, nor carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſlight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. For Antichriſt never was more formidable, than he is this day: nor ever will be leſs, till the two witneſſes have been killed, and are riſen again. And the only weapon to be uſed againſt the beaſt of the bottomleſs pit, is the ſword of the ſpirit, which is the word of God.

If any thing I have written, or any thing I could write, might be attended with the divine bleſſing; to draw ſouls to a ſincere diligent attention, to the record which God hath given of his Son, in the goſpel of his grace; I ſhould never deſire to publiſh more. For all ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God; all divine wiſdom ſhines in that holy volume; and all the heavenly light and comfort, that any ſoul can poſſibly receive, comes from that word of life.

And now my heart's deſire, and prayer to God, for you, is, That the ſpirit of truth, may guide you into all truth! That you may receive the kingdom of God as little children, in the ſimple truth, as it is preſented in the word of his holineſs! ſo as your ſouls, in very deed, may enter therein! that your underſtandings may be clear, your faith ſtrong, your love fervent, your humilty genuine, your conſolation unſhaken, your worſhip in the ſpirit, and your converſation ſuch as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.

I commit the following lines to the bleſſing of the ſpirit of the Father, and of the Son, to make them of uſe,

ſo

ſo far as it ſhall pleaſe him, to whomſoever he will. *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified.*

I am your Brother, and Companion in Tribulation, and in the kindom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt,

J. Johnſon.

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WHEN the Lord was pleaſed to call any man to his kingdom, his uſual ſpeech to him was, *Follow me.* And his general direction is the ſame to all: *If any man ſerve me, let him follow me.* And the deſcription of his ſelect diſciples, is this; *Theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth.*

BUT no man can be a follower of the Chriſt of God, who does not openly confeſs his name. Jeſus was an enſign lifted up. And his diſciples are a city ſet on a hill: and appointed to be a light to the world. But whatever ſhew people make, or however ſtrict they be in external converſation; they bring no glory to Chriſt, ſo long as they do not boldly confeſs him, as their Lord, and their God: to make it manifeſt, to whom their lives are devoted.

AND no man can truly confeſs the ſon of God, unleſs he follow him in the very way which the Lord himſelf hath preſcribed. To pretend to follow him by any other rule, is openly to deny him: foraſmuch as it is a rejection of his wiſdom, and his authority: and ſetting up the will and doctrines of men, as equal or ſuperior to the Lord of Glory.

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THERE is a general confeſſion which a man may make concerning himſelf, before men; whereby all may know who he is, or what he profeſſes. So the ancient church confeſſed, that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb. xi. 13, John Baptiſt confeſſed, that he was not the Chriſt, but that he was ſent before him. John iii. 28. Paul confeſſed, that after the way which they called hereſy, he worſhipped the God of his fathers. Acts xxiv. 14. And Timothy confeſſed, that he was called to eternal life. 1 Timothy, vi. 12.

BUT to confeſs the Son of God, is to acknowledge him, according to the record which the Father hath given of him. To aſcribe glory to him, in the moſt ſtrong and pointed manner: ſo as to expreſs the deepeſt impreſſions of the heart: or that our ſouls are perfectly devoted to him: in firm perſuaſion of mind, truſt, love, ſubmiſſion, obedience, hope, delight, &c. and that all our intellectual powers embrace him, as our All in all. And this is both to God, and before men. For the believing ſoul cannot keep ſilence. Pſalm cxvi. 10. To God he pours out his whole heart, and opens his very boſom, with reverence and godly fear. And to men, he is ready to proclaim his gratitude, and joy in the Lord, Pſalm lxvi. 16. For where the love of God is ſhed abroad in the heart, no man can ſtop that mouth, from ſhewing forth his praiſe. Pſalm xxxiv. 1, 2, 3.

I. THEY confeſs him, by a free open declaration of their faith, in the Holy One of God; whereby they acknowledge him, verily to be what he is. That he is the ſon of the living God, Mat. xvi. 16, John i. 49,

That

That he came from the Father, in all the divine fulneſs, John vi. 57. Col. i. 19. That he is the true God and eternal life, John xx. 28. 1 John v. 20. That he is Emmanuel, very God in our nature. John i. 14. 1 John iv. 2, 15. That he is the one mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. viii. 6. That he is the Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Saviour of his people, Eph. i. 7. Hebrews ii. 11. 1 John iv. 14. That he is the true prophet, prieſt and king, in his church, Deut. xviii. 18. Pſal. cx. 4. Mar. xi. 10. That he is the righteouſneſs of all his ſaints, Jer. xxiii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21. That he is the alone way to the Father, John xiv. 6. Eph. ii. 18. That he is the brightneſs of all glory, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Heb. i. 3. That he is the life their ſouls now enjoy, Gal ii. 20. Col. iii. 3, 4. And that he is their hope of eternal glory, Col. i. 27. Tit. ii. 13.

II. THEY confeſs the Lord of Glory, when they preſent praiſe and thankſgiving to God by him; aſcribing glory and bleſſing to the Father, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, Heb. xiii. 15. Eph. iii. 21. That which by the pſalmiſt is called, giving thanks; Pſal. xviii. 49, is by the apoſtle called, confeſſion, Rom. xv. 9. If we aſcribe praiſe to the Father, with underſtanding, by Jeſus Chriſt; we give equal glory to the Son, as to the Father: foraſmuch as all the glory of the Father ſhines in him, John v. 23. Acts iii. 13.

III. THEY confeſs the Lord, when they ſwear by his name: that is, when they appeal to him, who knows their hearts. For, to ſwear, in truth, is to preſent the heart before him that judgeth righteouſly. And thereby we confeſs his omniſcience, and his truth. We are

ſtrictly forbidden to ſwear by any other name. And for any to ſware by his name, who do not know it, is great profanation. And none can know the Father, but by the Son; therefore none can ſwear by the one, but what ſwear by the other, Mat. xxiii. 22. That which the peophet ſpeaks, *every tongue ſhall ſwear*, Iſai. xlv. 23. is expreſſed in the New Teſtament, *every tongue ſhall confeſs*, Rom. xiv, 11. Phil. ii. 3.

IV. THEY confeſs the Lord Jeſus, when they pray in his name. For every perſon, preſenting a petition to any being, does thereby confeſs the ſufficiency of that being to do the thing he aſks, as well as his dependence on the goodneſs of that being to grant his requeſt. And if he aſks in the name of any perſon, he does thereby confeſs that he is perſuaded that perſon has intereſt and power ſufficient to prevail, John xiv. 13, 14. Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, joins confeſſion and prayer together, as being the ſame thing, or inſeparable, 1 Kings viii. 33.

V. THEY confeſs the Holy One of God, when they make confeſſion of their ſins before him. For, to acknowledge an offence, with ſelf-abaſement, is an acknowledgement of the worth, dignity, or excellency of the perſon offended. Confeſſion of ſin, is an humble confeſſing the majeſty, holineſs, and perfection of God, againſt whom the ſin was committed, Pſalm li. 4, as well as his rich grace to forgive, Dan. ix. 9. When the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified among the Epheſians, many confeſſed and ſhewed their deeds, Acts xix. 17, 18. Believers, confeſſing their ſins in the

baptiſm

baptiſm of repentance, ſhews their dependance on the Son of God, to forgive their iniquities, Mat. iii. 6. Mark i. 4, 5. 1 John i. 9.

EVERY child of God under Heaven, is certain to confeſs the Lord; for if any man be aſhamed to confeſs him, it is becauſe that ſoul has never ſeen him, nor known him. But all that have known his name, and beheld his excellency, are ready to confeſs to God, with all their ſouls, and with all the powers within them: reſigning their whole ſelves to his wiſdom, power, truth and love. And without reſerve, they confeſs his name before all men. And he has promiſed to confeſs them, before his Father which is in Heaven, Mat. x. 32. Luke xii. 8. Rev. iii. 5.

NOW the Believer's Confeſſion of Chriſt, is threefold: that is, mental, verbal, and practical.

IT is with the heart, man believeth. And the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, *My ſon, give me thine heart.* David alſo ſaith, *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.* And again he ſays, *I will praiſe thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart.* Faith always worketh by love, and where the love of God is, the whole ſoul is ſurrendered to him, as its ſovereign Lord, its truſt, joy, and delight.

AND if the heart be united to embrace the Holy One, the mouth will confeſs him. *For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh.* And, *with the mouth confeſſion is made.* They that know his name, cannot be reſtrained from declaring his glory, ſpeaking of his excel-

lent majeſty, uttering his mighty acts, and expreſſing their gratitude for his abundant goodneſs, Acts iv. 20.

AND as the love of God fills the heart, and as the praiſe of God fills the lips and moves the tongue, that ſoul will aſſuredly confirm and ratify ſuch a confeſſion, by following Chriſt in his ordinances. For this is the criterion, *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* And his commandments are never grievous to them that love him. All the commandments of Chriſt to his church, are entirely directed for the benefit of his ſaints. Every ordinance which the Lord has appointed in his houſe, is intended to enlighten, quicken, comfort, confirm, enlarge, eſtabliſh, and repleniſh the ſouls of his diſciples in the fulneſs of Chriſt. And they are adapted to theſe two purpoſes, that they, thereby, may confeſs their faith in his name; and that they, therein, may behold the glory of his grace.

BUT in order to a right conception of thoſe which are called the ordinances of the houſe of God, it is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the different branches of laws and commandments which the Lord has, at divers times, and to people in divers circumſtances, diſpenſed to mankind.

THERE was the law given by Moſes, under the old covenant. This conſiſted of two branches; the former is contained in the ten commandments, and is adapted to all mankind. For whether thoſe commandments had ever been uttered in words or not, the things commanded are the natural duty of all the ſons of men. The latter was contained in rites and ceremonies, adapted only to the people of Iſrael, as a people whom God had diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed from the reſt of the world, and became obligatory to them only by virtue of the commandment, and conſiſted in figures and ſhadows of good things to come, being carnal ordinances impoſed on them till the time of the coming of the Meſſiah the ſubſtance, and then ceaſed.

THERE are alſo the commandments of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which are not the ſame with thoſe given at mount Sinai, but of a much higher and more excellent nature; and theſe conſiſt of two branches. The former relates to the behaviour of his diſciples (for to them only his laws are directed) how they ſhall conduct themſelves to all mankind, and in all their converſation. This may bear ſome reſemblance to the ten commandments, but goes far beyond them. Foraſmuch as the children of God enjoy greater bleſſings, and are endued with greater light and power, through the ſpirit of Chriſt, than the children of men enjoy by nature, therefore greater things are required of them. Such as loving enemies, bearing inſults, praying for them that hate us, doing good to thoſe that deſpitefully uſe us, denying ourſelves, taking up our croſs, forſaking all our enjoyments for his name's ſake, if required, &c. &c. &c. The moral law requires juſtice, truth, and equity, but Jeſus came to diſplay grace and mercy, therefore his diſciples muſt reſemble their Lord herein, Mat. v. 45, 48. But the latter branch of the commandments of the Lord, are thoſe properly called the ordinances of his houſe, and relate to the worſhip of God according to the ordinances of the goſpel, wherein the ſaints hold communion with Chriſt in the ſpirit and are ſo many different modes appointed by our great High Prieſt for us to draw nigh to God, therein to worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth.

TWO of theſe ordinances are purely figurative. To repreſent, or hold forth, in public ſigns, all the bleſſings of the kingdom of God. Theſe are the ordinance of baptiſm, and the ordinance of breaking bread. The former is a repreſentation of all the grace, which a ſoul is made partaker of, to bring him out of a ſtate of ſin into a ſtate of life. The latter is a repreſentation of all the grace, with which a ſoul is bleſſed, to bring him up to a ſtate of heavenly glory. The former is done only once, as it is a ſign of thoſe things which can paſs upon the perſon only once. The latter is to be done often, as it is a ſign of thoſe things, which are perpetually repeated, till we arrive at eternal perfection. The former is perſonal, to expreſs God's elect gathered one by one out of the world into the ſheep-fold. The latter is ſocial, to expreſs the unity of the body of Chriſt, when gathered into one ſociety or ſelect church.

AND being only ſigns and ſhadows of Chriſt the living ſubſtance, they cannot be of any benefit to any perſon living, only to ſuch as receive them with underſtanding, by faith beholding the things therein ſignified; without which (theſe ordinances are ſo ſacred) it is damnation to every one that toucheth them, 1 Cor. xi. 29. In the order in which the ſpiritual bleſſings are communicated, of which theſe ordinances are figures, the ordinances are to be performed; firſt baptiſm, then the Lord's ſupper, otherwiſe it is all inconſiſtency and confuſion.

AND as theſe ordinances of the goſpel of the Son of God, whereby the truth of Chriſt is held forth to us, in various modes and lively figures; and as in theſe ſignificant repreſentations of rich grace, our faith in Chriſt is

confeſſed

confeſſed, they are to be adminiſtered, by a faithful miniſter of Chriſt, to ſuch perſons as have been duly taught, and have made a verbal confeſſion of their faith in the Lord Emmanuel; and who approach to the Lord, in theſe ordinances, as a ratification of the confeſſion which they have made with their mouth, Rom. x. 10, or thereby to ſet to their ſeal, or ſubſcribe to the truth of the teſtimony of God, Iſai. xliv. 5. John iii. 33.

WHOSOEVER has a right to partake of one of theſe ordinances, has a right to partake of the other alſo; for they are the commandments of the Lord, to all who believe in his name. And every one who believes on him in truth, will certainly follow him in theſe inſtructive and lively figures of his grace.

BAPTISM.

THE deſign of this ordinance is to make manifeſt the Son of God: as ſaid the meſſenger that went before him: *But that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with water.* And it is appointed to all that believe in Jeſus, thereby to manifeſt their faith in the Chriſt of God. And it is the firſt ordinance wherein any man can openly declare his faith in the Holy One, or confeſs the Lord of glory. For whatever confeſſion any man makes with his mouth, it ſtands for nothing, ſo long as he does not conform to the appointed order. So long as he remains unbaptized, his verbal confeſſion is like a will or deed, which being ever ſo correctly drawn, yet, while it remains unexecuted.

cuted, bears no authority. And, on the other hand, a perſon baptized, without making an explicit confeſſion of his faith in him whom the Father ſent, and being baptized in ratification thereof, is of no ſignification at all, but is like a man ſetting his hand and ſeal to a blank: which has no meaning, but is meer mockery.

THEY that reject this ordinance, deſpiſe the Son of God, and reject the counſel of God againſt themſelves. Foraſmuch as it is the appointment of God, who ſent John to baptize with water: John i. 33, and the commandment of Chriſt to his apoſtles: Mat. xxviii. 19, nor is it ever ſuppoſed that any one could be a believer, and live in the neglect thereof, Mark xvi. 16. Luke vii. 29, 30. And they that change this ordinance, either in the ſubject or the mode, from the pattern given, by John the Baptiſt, by Jeſus Chriſt, and by his Apoſtles, prove themſelves to be in open rebellion againſt the Lord: as they ſet up antichriſt in the temple of God. To change the ordinances, is a more heinous crime than to reject them altogether. Theſe are reckoned among the abominable of the the earth, Iſai. xxiv. 5.

THIS ordinance is to be performed in water. It is to be adminiſtered to all believers, and to them only. And it is to be done by immerſion, dipping, going down into the water; ſo waſhing the whole body. For no other perſons, but believers, can poſſibly receive any benefit thereby, or give any glory to God therein. Nor can any other mode, bear any juſt reſemblance to the things thereby ſignified.

IT would be altogether vanity, to write any thing in proof of theſe things, for the ſcripture holds them forth in ſo clear a light, that it is impoſſible there ſhould be a rational man or woman in England, that ever did ſincerely bend their minds to know theſe things, and with integrity of heart, to learn the mind of God from his pure word, but what does certainly know them, as well as they know their right hand from their left. And if perſons are ſo infatuated with the traditions of men, that they have no deſire to know the truth of God, but bend their minds to reſiſt and oppoſe it; there is nothing to be ſaid or written to ſuch perſons, that can cauſe them to receive what their ſouls hate.

THIS ordinance is from heaven. Appointed by divine authority, for John was ſent from God, and Jeſus commanded his diſciples to baptize; ſo that Jeſus is ſaid to baptize, becauſe he was with his diſciples, and they baptized by his immediate direction, John i. 33—iii. 22.—iv. 1, 2, yet the prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, declared, they did not know whence it was. But this was not becauſe the matter was obſcure, or ambiguous, but becauſe their enmity would not permit them to attend to it. And this is the caſe at this day, with thoſe that depart from the pattern given by the Lord, and pretend the thing is doubtful, or a matter of indifferency, and endeavour by falſe imaginary gloſſes, to confound the genuine order. But the Lord, foreſeeing, how his ſacred order of baptiſm would be mangled and profaned, (through the ſubtil inſtigation of the devil, who by perverting the ſign, draws mens eyes from the ſubſtance;) was pleaſed to ſet it forth in ſo clear and diſtinct a light, that whoſoever ſhould preſume to change it, ſhould have no excuſe for their rebellion.

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The Lord of Glory was baptized in the due order, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps, Mat. iii. 13—17. Mark i. 9, 10, 11. Luke iii. 21, 22.

IT is commanded to all believers univerſally; and every believer in the univerſe, is ready to confeſs Chriſt in this ordinance. For there cannot be a believer under Heaven, who does not delight to confeſs that worthy name. And there is no way of confeſſing the Lord Jeſus, without baptiſm. But no unbeliever can touch it, without the greateſt profanation. For, to come to this ordinance of Chriſt with any other view than to confeſs his holy name, is the moſt inſolent mockery: and for any to pretend to confeſs his name, who do not believe in him with all the heart, is the moſt hypocritical lie.

IT is called *the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*; therefore, every one that is baptized according to the primitive inſtitution, is truly convinced of his ſinful ſtate, and confeſſes his wretchedneſs; that his whole life has been a life of ſin, and alienation from God; and that, ſo long as he remained without Chriſt, whatever he thought to be his beſt works, were done in a carnal principle, which being enmity againſt God, thoſe works have all been unholy before God. And that he now comes to the great Redeemer for deliverance from the whole body of his ſinfulneſs, depending alone on the virtue of the blood of the lamb for remiſſion of his ſins. And declaring his ſincere repentance from his dead works, and that he now yields himſelf to God, to be refined from all his pollutions, through the ſpecial grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; by the powerful influence of the ſpirit of holineſs; in the

effectual

effectual application of the goſpel of the grace of God. And that he now ſubmits to the teachings of the word of Chriſt, under the guidance of the ſpirit of truth, to direct him how to walk to the glory of God the remaining part of his life. And that his ſoul's deſire is to keep the commandments of the Lord; and that he is now waiting for wiſdom and power from Chriſt the fountain of life, that he may live to the glory of the Father, till God ſhall pleaſe to call him out of the body.

IT is a concomitant of the goſpel of Chriſt, and they never can be ſeparate: wherever the one is received, the other is practiſed, Mark xvi. 16, Acts viii. 12. xviii. 8. Not as a taſk impoſed, but a delightful approaching into the preſence of God by Jeſus Chriſt; or a joyful following the Lamb, to partake of the bleſſings of his Father's houſe. As the goſpel freely flows to them from Jeſus Chriſt, they likewiſe freely flow to the goodneſs of the Lord. All that were baptized, are repreſented as coming of their own free choice, and being as freely received, when they manifeſted faith in God's holy One, Acts viii. 36, 37. And if the ſoul be truly taught, and a miniſter of Chriſt be at hand, an opportunity may eaſily be found: for the ordinance of baptiſm may be adminiſtered, at any time, or in any place, where there is convenience to do it in order with due ſolemnity, John i. 28, iii. 23. Acts xvi. 33.

ALL that believe on the Son of God, are by faith introduced into the ſpiritual kingdom of God; and all that are baptized upon this principle, are initiated into the viſible church of Chriſt. And as theſe things can be done only once, ſo baptiſm is to be only once performed,

and

and never to be repeated. But it may be ſaid, "There were ſome baptized at Epheſus, which had been baptized before," Acts xix. 3, 5. It is true, thoſe perſons were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus, after they heard and received the goſpel of Chriſt: but it is not ſaid they were baptized *again*, for that which they had received was not the baptiſm of Chriſt, but an impoſition, whereby ſome miniſter of Satan had deluded them, by acting upon them a child's-play, or a fool's-play, under pretence of John's baptiſm. And even, of the baptiſm of John, they were totally ignorant; and Paul had to explain to them what John's baptiſm was. The baptiſm of John was in fact the very ſame with the baptiſm of Chriſt, (only then they confeſſed their faith in him that was to come, and now they confeſs their faith in him that is come.) John did not baptize without preaching the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, John i. 31—34. But thoſe deceived creatures had not heard whether there was any Holy Ghoſt, ſo then they could know nothing of Chriſt. A man may learn to ſound the name of Chriſt, who knows nothing of the truth of that name. But no man can believe in the Anointed of God, who does not believe in the Holy Ghoſt, by whom he is anointed. Therefore, that baptiſm, or profanation, which had been impoſed on theſe men, was of no more avail than the pretended baptiſm of infants is now, but was rejected as a perfect nullity. I know there have been many perſons who have raiſed quibbling arguments, to prove that that mock baptiſm was allowed to ſtand, and that they were not baptized after Paul preached to them. But it is all fiction, and vain amuſement.

BAPTISM is to be adminiſtered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, Matt. xxviii. 19. This cannot intend the bare pronouncing the words, calling over the names of the holy Three; but that the miniſters of Chriſt are to preach this glorious doctrine in the pure light of the New Teſtament. And when any ſoul receives it, and makes an open confeſſion that he believes in the Father, in his eſſential love and boundleſs grace; the ſource of all bleſſing, life, peace, ſalvation, and eternal glory. That he believes in the Son, God manifeſt in the fleſh; or the ſame God, going forth in our nature, in all the perfection of the Father, to reveal the unſearchable riches of his goodneſs to the ſons of men, and to communicate to us all the bleſſings of everlaſting ſalvation, and all the glories of his kingdom. That he believes in the Holy Ghoſt, the divine Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son; the ſame God in his ſpecial vital influence, communicating into our hearts all the bleſſings of goſpel grace, and enriching our ſouls with all the fulneſs of the Father and the Son. Then the perſon comes to the ordinance of baptiſm, to ſet to his ſeal, or to ratify this confeſſion; and upon this confeſſion, the miniſter baptizes him into this name.

As baptiſm is the firſt introduction into the profeſſion of the truth as it is in Jeſus, it is not to be expected that the believer ſhould then be come to his full ripeneſs in the kingdom of God. It is the open entrance into the ſchool, or ſtate of diſcipleſhip, wherein they are to be inſtructed into the deep things of God, that they may learn the ſublime myſteries of the Father and of Chriſt.

Yet

Yet it is impoſſible for any to be baptized, according to the ſacred inſtitution, until they have underſtood the firſt rudiments of the goſpel, and are by faith built upon the true foundation, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. But it is after this that the Lord has commanded them to be taught, to obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded, Matt. xxviii. 20. And it is after they had been baptized, and gathered into communities, that the apoſtles gave ſo many admonitions, and offered ſo many prayers for the diſciples, that they might increaſe in grace, and grow in knowledge, wiſdom, and ſpiritual underſtanding. Apollos was inſtructed in the way of the Lord, ſo far as related to the baptiſm of John, yet he wanted the way of God to be expounded to him more perfectly, Acts xviii. 24, 25, 26. Thoſe twelve mentioned afterward, who pretended to John's baptiſm, ſome have ſuppoſed to have been baptized by Apollos. But that was impoſſible; for he did know the baptiſm of John, whereas thoſe men knew nothing of it. And being fervent in ſpirit, he could not be guilty of ſuch wickedneſs, to baptize them without inſtructing them in what he himſelf knew. But it may not be improbable, that ſome of thoſe vagabonds that haunted Epheſus, going about to mimick what others did, might have gathered an empty notion from what Apollos preached, to impoſe on thoſe men.

THE miniſtry of the goſpel cannot be committed to any man unbaptized. It would be ſuch an abſurdity as never proceeded from the Lord of glory, to ſend a man to preach the kingdom of God, who himſelf never had an orderly entrance into it. When an apoſtle was to be choſen in the place of Judas, he muſt be one who had companied

companied with the diſciples, beginning from the baptiſm of John, Act. i. 21, 22. Neither is it to be found, that any was called to preach the goſpel, till they had been tried, and conſolidated in the things of the kingdom, after baptiſm. Jeſus himſelf, did not enter his miniſtry, till after he was baptized, and had endured very ſtrong temptation. And he aſſured his apoſtles, that they ſhould drink of his cup, and be baptized with his baptiſm of ſufferings. Saul appears to come into the miniſtry, as expeditiouſly as any we find mentioned: yet, after his baptiſm, he was certain days with the diſciples, before he began to preach, Act. ix. 18, 19, 20. No man can be fit to preach the goſpel, or to execute any office in the church of God, until he is baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, Luke xxiv. 49. Act. i. 4, 5, 8.—vi. 3. And no man has any right to expect to receive the Holy Ghoſt, ſo long as he has not confeſſed Chriſt, by following the Lord in the baptiſm of water: for therewith the promiſe is annexed, Act. ii. 38. So that, ſo long as any man remains unbaptized with water, it is impoſſible for him to wait in faith for the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt. It is true, in ſome caſes extraordinary, wherein God was willing to ſhew to his diſciples, a ſtriking ſign of his good pleaſure; it was his pleaſure to go out of the common way, by giving the Holy Ghoſt, prior to baptiſm, Act. ix. 17—10. 44. But it was a favor granted, which thoſe perſons could not have aſked. And when they had received it, they made no delay, immediately to be baptized. Nor was any ſoul, after he believed, ever known to neglect to be baptized. I do not ſay, that baptiſm may not be defered for a time, for ſubſtantial reaſons; but never thro' neglect, or indifference; after the ſoul commences a believer.

IT may be that a perſon may remain unbaptized, after the word of truth may have made ſome impreſſions upon his heart, or after ſome rays of life may be communicated into the ſoul; or when he may be bleſſed with ſome meaſure of faith. For we cannot define the length or ſhortneſs of time, that may be between the conception and the birth: or the time of pregnancy, before the actual bringing forth. The ſtory of inſtantaneous regeneration, is a deluſive fiction; invented to make the operation of God appear as a bubble. But when the ſoul is truly paſſed from death unto life; tranſlated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; brought forth into the open air of the ſpirit; to be denominated a believer, believing with all his heart; that Soul makes no delay to follow the Lamb. I have known many, who have profeſſed to believe in Chriſt; who have given one reaſon and anotner, why they were not baptized; but I always knew the true reaſon, becauſe they did not believe with all the heart. I ſee no reaſon to fear that any one ſhould neglect baptiſm, whoſe heart the Lord hath truly prepared: for I do not apprehend that ſuch a thing ever was, or can be. So long as any thing holds them back, there is ſomething lacking in their faith; which renders them unfit ſubjects to come to ſuch a ſacred ordinance, There is more cauſe to fear, and to grieve, that ſo many, of their own accord, heedleſly ruſh to the ordinance, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle. And ſo many ſuffer themſelves to be led, and wheedled by the perſuaſions of others, to come to the ordinance; like a fool to the correction of the ſtocks. And ſo, without counting the coſt, or due preparation; come into the houſe, not having wedding garments.

BAPTISM is a lively figure, ſhadow, or repreſentation, of a very glorious ſubſtance; but in the outward operation itſelf, there is no virtue. There can be no ſpiritual virtue in the water, in the act, or in the words; any otherwiſe than as the thing ſignified is beheld by faith. Therefore no perſon can poſſibly receive any benefit thereby any further than his mind is enlightened, to view, contemplate, believe, and rejoice, in the living ſubſtance therein held forth. So that it is of the utmoſt conſequence to every one that deſires to draw nigh to God, in this tremendous ordinance, that his mind be well cultivated with the knowledge of the true God, and of Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent, that they may not worſhip they know not what. *God is a ſpirit, and they that worſhip him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.*

IT is therefore neceſſary for every one that deſires to confeſs Chriſt in baptiſm, diſtinctly to ponder the word of truth, that he may underſtand the true intent of this ſacred commandment of the Lord, and carefully to avoid all traditions and gloſſes of men, as well as all imaginations or inventions of his own, that he may receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word; in which word he may find, diſtinctly pointed out, the particular bleſſings of the fulneſs of Chriſt, to which a compleat immerſion, or dipping in water, bears a lively reſemblance, and has a natural tendency, when beheld by faith, to excite the mind to heavenly things.

1. BAPTISM is a lively repreſentation of the deep ſufferings of Chriſt for our ſins, whereby he made peace by the blood of his croſs, and brought in remiſſion of ſins

and everlasting righteousness. These sufferings are represented in the scriptures as the most pungent and excruciating, as they needs must be, forasmuch as himself bare our iniquities. For our offences had justly exposed us to the utmost wrath, and the severest punishment; and the deserved vengeance, in all its aggravations, was inflicted on him. *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* The psalmist represents him speaking thus in his complaint: *I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.* And by the prophet his suffering is thus expressed: *He hath poured out his soul unto death.* The Evangelists tell us how he expressed himself in his anguish: *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* And one of them says, *And, being in an agony, he prayed the more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* Yea, in the piercing torture of his soul, he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And the apostle says, *When he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears,* &c. In all which was fulfilled what David had prophetically spoken of him, *My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

THIS, and much more than can be expressed to human capacities, the Lord certainly sustained for our sins. For, in that he himself bare our transgressions, so as to put a period to that insupportable weight of misery which we had each one brought upon ourselves, it must involve him in such a depth of torture as no mortal man is able to conceive: And this he calls *a baptism*, saying, *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished!* And to the sons of Zebedee, he compared

ed his afflictions to baptiſm, when he put the queſtion to them, *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with?* There is only one baptiſm, appointed in the church, to be practiſed by the diſciples of Chriſt, that is, the baptiſm of water. And this is a ſhadow of all the other baptiſms mentioned in ſcripture. And wherever baptiſm is ſimply mentioned, without ſomething in the context directing us to underſtand ſome of thoſe baptiſms, which are the work of God; the baptiſm of water, which is performed by men, and is the figure of the true; is always the thing intended. With this baptiſm the Lord of glory was baptized, to ſhew his willingneſs to enter the baptiſm of ſufferings for our redemption; and with this baptiſm all his diſciples are baptized, to confeſs that their hearts embrace the doctrine of his ſufferings, as the alone atonement for their ſins; and that their ſole dependence is upon the virtue of the tremendous paſſion of him that was made a ſacrifice to God for us, for redemption, righteouſneſs, and eternal ſalvation.

2. It is a direct repreſentation of the ſufferings, in which all the diſciples of Jeſus are certain to be involved, in conſequence of their being followers of the Son of God. Through much tribulation we muſt enter the kingdom of God; for all that are the real followers of the Chriſt of God, ſhall be hated of all men for his name's ſake. And it is impoſſible for any man to embrace the truth, as it is in Jeſus, but that he unavoidably becomes the object of the hatred of this world. For Chriſt hath called them out of the world, and made them ſons of God. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not.*

And

And as the two ſeeds are abſolutely irreconcileable, they that are born after the fleſh, will perſecute them that are born after the ſpirit. *Yea, all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* And this is the will of God, that all his choſen ſhall have tribulation in the world, that their faith may be tried, that they may be kept humble, and that their hearts may rely on the Lord alone. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.* This is called the fiery trial which is to try you, of which the Lord ſays, *I am come to ſend fire on the earth.* Theſe ſufferings with Chriſt are repreſented in the ordinance of baptiſm, and are by himſelf called *baptiſm.* As he ſaid to the ſons of Zebedee, *Ye ſhall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptiſm that I am baptized withal ſhall ye be baptized.* If any man ſhall pretend to draw nigh to God in this ſacred ordinance, without a full expectation of that fiery baptiſm, of which the baptiſm of water is an expreſs figure, and without a ſubmiſſive reſignation to the will of God therein, and a fixed dependence on the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to ſuſtain him under it, and deliver him out of it, that perſon is only deceiving himſelf, acting a child's-play before the Lord, and performing he knows not what.

3. CHRIST preſenting himſelf to God in baptiſm, and paſſing through the water in external devotion to his Father, did profeſs a total ſubmiſſion to the will and work of his Father. That he did now relinquiſh all the concerns of a private life, in which he had been brought up, Luke ii. 51. Mar. vi. 3, wholly to engage in the work of his Father's kingdom. He did not baptize himſelf, but preſented

preſented himſelf to the ſervant, to whom the Father had given commiſſion for that work, to ſhew that he was at the ſole command and diſpoſal of his Father; though John, knowing his own deep inferiority, ſaid to the Lord, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me?* But Jeſus anſwered, *Suffer it to be ſo now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs*, Mat. iii. 13, 14, 15. The bare act of baptiſm (or any other act of bodily exerciſe) could not fulfil any righteouſneſs: it was only a declaration of his readineſs to obey whatſoever his Father ſhould command. As the kingdom of Chriſt is perfectly open, reſpecting both the head and the members; and as Jeſus came to do the will of him that ſent him, he muſt enter upon that work in the moſt open, as well as in the moſt ſolemn manner. It was in doing the whole will of his Father, that he fulfilled all righteouſneſs. In that he declared the glory of his Father, became the Light of the world, wrought redemption for his Choſen, magnified the holy law, made an end of ſins, brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, deſtroyed the works of the devil, and opened the way to eternal life, John iv. 34.—xvii. 4. And in his baptiſm he ſhewed his devotedneſs to this work, and that with all his ſoul he took upon him to perform all his Father's commandments: And every one that follows Chriſt in this ordinance, does thereby acknowledge him as the accompliſher of all the work of his Father for them, and their ſole dependence on him for righteouſneſs before God. *Who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption.*

4. BAPTISM is a repreſentation of our putting on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Paſſing through the water in his name,

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is a figure, and a profeſſion of our paſſing away from all other things to Chriſt alone; to embrace him as our ſalvation, our life, and the fountain of all our bleſſedneſs; to ſubmit to his will in whatſoever he is pleaſed to command, to lay upon us, or to do with us; and to acknowledge him in all things as our Lord and our God. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* All that are baptized into the Son of God, do thereby confeſs themſelves, in every thing, to be given to him, as ſons and daughters, ſervants and handmaids, diſciples, followers, and worſhippers. They put on his name as the height of their glory; they put on his righteouſneſs as their peace with God; they put on the doctrine of his word as their light; they put on the promiſes in his word as their hope; they put on his ordinances in the appointed order as their diſtinguiſhing character among men; they put on the worſhip and order of his houſe for edification and comfortable communion one with another; and they put on ſuch a converſation as becomes the goſpel, that it may be manifeſt that they have learned of him in truth. *Theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth.*

5. GOING down into the water being a reſemblance of death, is a figure of the dying of the Lord of glory, who, notwithſtanding he is the immortal God, yet having taken our nature, and (for our redemption) having taken our mortality, he laid down his life, being made obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. The pſalmiſt, perſonating the Son of God in his ſuffering, ſaith, *Thou haſt brought me into the duſt of death.* And this death was for no other cauſe but for our ſins. *Meſſiah ſhall be cut off,*

off, but not for himſelf. This is a truth often expreſſed; *Chriſt died for the ungodly. Chriſt died for us. Chriſt died for our ſins.* Every one therefore, that is indeed baptized in the name of Jeſus, does in his baptiſm confeſs that he believes that the Son of God did actually lay down his life; and did verily pour out his ſoul unto death. He alſo does thereby confeſs, that his very heart is firmly perſuaded, that it was alone for ſinners, that Chriſt died; and that his death (being appointed of God for that end) was of perfect virtue to remove all ſin; and to redeem us from the curſe of the law. His blood being offered, through the eternal ſpirit, without ſpot to God. And he alſo does thereby confeſs, that he does not expect forgiveneſs of ſins any other way, but alone in the virtue of the death of Chriſt. Or, that his faith is fixed alone upon the precious blood of Jeſus, for redemption and remiſſion of ſins. *Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death.*

6 BEING covered in the water, is a reſemblance of burial, and is intended as a repreſentation of the burial of our Lord Jeſus. Who, *Made his grave with the wicked.* Of whom the apoſtle affirms, as a branch of the goſpel which he received; *That he was buried.* As he alſo aſſerted, *That he deſcended into the lower parts of the earth*; which was witneſſed by his diſciples; who, *Beheld where he was laid.* And was ratified by the angel; *Come ſee the place where the Lord lay.* As burial is the laſt thing to be done to a mortal being, Jeſus did therein make manifeſt the reality of his death; and that he ſunk to the loweſt pitch, under our ſins; or that he ſuffered all that was poſſible to be inflicted on an offender. As ſaith the prophet,

For he shall bear their iniquities. The sufferings in his body, were but a specimen of what he suffered in his soul, Mar. xiv. 34.—xv. 34.; yet, it was the utmost that could appear visible to human eyes. The curse descended with him to the grave; but there he left it, for ever buried: never more to rise. *For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* For when he arose from the grave, having made full atonement for the sins of his people; he came forth perfectly free from all their guilt, and all their condemnation. And henceforth he appears in the rich perfume of his divine grace, and the sweet incense of his intercession. To this end it was, that the precious ointment was poured on his head, as a representation of the rich anointing, and sweet savour of the sacrifice, which should be diffused, in consequence of his death and resurrection. Hence, he said, *She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.* And every one that is baptized in his name, does therein make confession of his burial, as being the finishing of sin. That it was their sins that brought him to the grave; that they believe all their sins were forever extinguished in his grave; and being assured, they never more shall rise to their condemnation, in the sight of God; they now look to Jesus alone, for perfect righteousness, peace with God, and everlasting life. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.*

7 COMING up out of the water, is a lively figure of the resurrection of the Lord of Glory. For as he died for our sins, and suffered the most exquisite pain, both in soul and body, till his life was taken away; and under the remaining weight of sin, he was held in the grave till sin

was

was totally dead; he then reaſſumed his life, it being impoſſible for him any longer to be holden of the power of mortality. As he ſaid concerning his life, *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* And as he ſaid again, *This commandment have I received of my Father.* To whom he appeals in the words of the pſalmiſt, *For thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption.* The reſurrection of the holy One is an infallible demonſtration, that he had amply performed all that he undertook to ſuffer for ſinners. That tranſgreſſion was compleatly finiſhed, that Satan's power was defeated, reconciliation made, and peace eſtabliſhed, by the blood of his croſs. He puts to ſilence all condemnation; for it is plain ſin is blotted out, and the curſe extinguiſhed, in the precious blood of Jeſus, *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification.* The doctrine of the reſurrection of Jeſus, both as to the fact and the efficacy thereof, is ſo abundantly verified in the New Teſtament, that none can doubt it, who pay a ſincere regard to the word of truth. And every one that is baptized in the name of Jeſus, is baptized in the faith of his reſurrection. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death; that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in the newneſs of life.*

8. As baptiſm is a figure of the death of Chriſt, it alſo is a figure of the believers death to ſin through the faith of Chriſt. *Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Every believing ſoul is crucified with Chriſt. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with*

him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin. So long as we remain without Chriſt, we are the ſervants of ſin, the whole man is devoted to ſin, and pollution pervades every member, and our whole life is alienation from God. But if ever we receive Chriſt, we receive that holy principle which produces univerſal repentance, which makes us dead to whatſoever our lives have been before: For whatever our actions have been, they have proceeded from a carnal principle, which cannot pleaſe God. If a man has lived in groſs abominations, this his ſoul muſt now abhor. If he has lived in ſenſual gratification, this ſhewed he was dead to the life of God. If he has lived in the love of the world, this is full proof that the love of the Father was not in him. If he has lived a life of indolence and ſupineneſs, this ſhewed him to be a ſtranger to the life of God. If he has been devoted to what is called virtue, benevolence, and doing good to mankind, with the ſtricteſt truth and honeſty, as well as ſoberneſs of life and converſation; though theſe things are morally good, upon examination he will find, that theſe things proceeded from education, example, or a natural diſpoſition, and not from faith, therefore cannot pleaſe God. If he has lived a life of religion, whenſoever his eyes are open, he will ſee that it was only hypocriſy and formality without life, as it proceeded from the wiſdom of men, or the will of the fleſh, and not from the power of God. If he has made an outward profeſſion of the goſpel of Chriſt, according to the theory; approving ſome points of doctrine, pretending to what many profeſſors call experience, and conforming to ſome modes of worſhip, after the common traditions of profeſſors; if ever his eyes be opened, he will

will be convinced that this was only saying, in a loose way, *Lord, Lord*; or a form without the power, which the God of truth hateth. Therefore, whensoever the truth of Christ is manifest in any heart, and the life of Jesus takes place in that soul, then repentance becomes universal, and the soul dies to every thing that he lived unto before. Be it open sins or secret sins, human virtue or religion, imaginary innocency, dead works or false hopes, he relinquishes all as a dead man. *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Every one that is baptized in his holy name, does thereby profess himself to be dead to every thing but Christ alone. *Buried with him by baptism into death.*

9. As the burial of Christ is signified in baptism, so is the believer's burial with Christ signified therein. As sin was buried with Christ, no more to rise, so it is buried to all that believe, never more to live to condemn, or have dominion over them. For God hath said, *Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* As he also said again, *I will take away the names of Baalim out of their mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.* As a man that is buried appears no more, so where the faith of Christ is, the love of God and the fear of God is so radicated in that heart, that sin can never rise to reign any more. *If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin* And that which is dead through the life of Christ, is dead for ever. *Now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.* Christ did not come to perform a partial salvation, but an everlasting salvation; that his children,

children, being dead to ſin, might never more be brought into bondage, but might enjoy perfect and uninterrupted freedom from all iniquity. *For he that it dead is freed from ſin.* We do not ſay, that no offenſive ſtench may ever riſe out of the grave, for that we may expect, Rom. vii. 18. But the body of ſin ſhall never be able to riſe, Rom. vii. 25. Foraſmuch as Chriſt ſuffered death for us, all his elect ſuffer ſuch a death with him, whereby they ceaſe from ſin. *That he no longer ſhould live the reſt of his time in the fleſh, to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.* And every one that is joined with Chriſt in baptiſm, is, by faith, made partaker of his death and burial, and enjoys the power and virtue thereof in his own ſoul. And as a teſtimony of the operation wrought in him, he draws nigh to God in this ordinance. *Buried with him in baptiſm.*

10. As the reſurrection of the Lord of glory, from under the puniſhment of our ſins, is figured in baptiſm, ſo our reſurrection from the power of ſin is ſhadowed in the ſame ordinance. *Now if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him.* For whatever Chriſt performed for us, the ſame he will perform in us. *That like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.* This, in its meaſure, is experienced by every Chriſtian, who truly believes in the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus. *Even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt.—And hath raiſed us up together.* To attain to the perfection of this new life, the apoſtle ſo earneſtly preſſes forward. *If by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead.* Hence it is plain, that a ſpiritual reſurrection

reſurrection is wrought in every child of light. The ſoul is bleſſed with the truth of the divine life, or is made partaker of the divine nature, from the firſt that he believes in Chriſt with all his heart, and he can ſay, *I live by the faith of the Son of God.* But this life comes to perfection, as the ſoul arrives at maturity in grace. This ſpiritual reſurrection, from the ſtate of ſin to the heavenly life, is truly confeſſed with the higheſt gratitude, and the completion thereof is waited for with the moſt fervent deſire, by every one that ſincerely waits on the Lord in baptiſm. *Wherein alſo you are riſen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.*

11. THE general reſurrection from the dead is very ſignificantly repreſented in baptiſm. This is one of the ſix principles, which are joined together as the firſt principles of the oracles of God, and are called the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, Heb. vi. 1, 2. And foraſmuch as they are the firſt rudiments of the truth of the goſpel, and are laid as the foundation, it is impoſſible that any ſoul ſhould be built up in Chriſt, or make any advances in the kingdom of God, who is not truly initiated into the life of theſe. Though they are collected in their order only in this place, they are clearly to be gathered from the whole New Teſtament. And they ſtand in ſuch perfect connexion, that it is impoſſible for any living man to receive any one of them in true ſpirit, life, and conſiſtency, but that he muſt receive them every one; for the chain cannot be broken, and whoſoever diſbelieves any one of theſe, the ſame cannot have the faith of the Son of God. Take away any one of them, and the glory of the

the Meſſiah diſappears. But the doctrine of the reſurrection is the principle at preſent before us. All real Chriſtians are eſtabliſhed in the reſurrection of Chriſt, *who by him do believe in God that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory.* Every man that believes the reſurrection of Chriſt, believes the univerſal reſurrection of the human ſpecies. I do not ſay every one that may have an empty notion in his head, but I ſay every man that believes the former, upon the teſtimony of God, cannot be ignorant of the latter; and whoſoever believes the latter, cannot be ignorant of the former. For the reſurrection of all mankind depends on the reſurrection of the man Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 13, 16, 20. This is the infallible earneſt of the reſurrection of all the ſons of men. *Whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* Foraſmuch then as baptiſm is taught as a lively figure of the reſurrection, every man that is baptized into Chriſt, does therein confeſs the reſurrection of Jeſus, and declare himſelf to be riſen with Chriſt, through the faith of the operation of God, with a firm aſſurance of the reſurrection of all men, and a lively hope that himſelf ſhall be raiſed with all the ſaints to everlaſting life. *For if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.* Hence the apoſtle argues the inconſiſtency of any that pretend to believe in Chriſt, diſbelieving the reſurrection: Foraſmuch as all Chriſtians are baptized in the faith thereof, and in full expectation of deliverance from the natural death, without which there could be no poſſibility of inheriting eternal life. *Elſe what ſhall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?*

12. As

12. As baptiſm is a compleat waſhing of the whole body, it is a proper ſimilitude of the waſhing away of ſins from the whole ſoul. Ananias ſaid to Saul, *And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Saul having been a perſecutor and injurious, Ananias might ſpeak of an external clearing of himſelf in the ſight of men. By a bold confeſſion of Chriſt in the act of baptiſm, declaring his faith in the Son of God, openly manifeſting ſubmiſſion to his will, and boldly confeſſing his name, he would wipe away the reproach of being a perſecutor and blaſphemer for the future. But this was not all that was intended; for the diſciples of Jeſus are taught to truſt in him, for purging away of all iniquity in the ſight of God; which cannot be done by any external performance, for ſin is in the conſcience, where material water can have no influence, only as a viſible ſign, whereby we declare our faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and aſcribe glory *unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.* By giving his life a ranſom for us, he made atonement for our ſins, took away the curſe, and made peace through the blood of his croſs. *For thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood.* And as it was by the ſacrifice of himſelf that he put away the wrath which was upon us for ſin, ſo by the virtue of his blood, preſented to the underſtanding in the goſpel, and made effectual to the conſcience by the ſpirit of divine power, guilt is removed from the intellectual mind, *And the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his ſon cleanſeth us from all ſin.* Thus the conſcience is juſtified, and made free from all condemnation, *being now juſtified by his blood.* And it is by the virtue of the ſame blood that the conſcience is purified from the love of ſin, and delivered from the domi-

nion thereof; yea the heart is made clean, and the conſcience purged from dead works, as every believer upon earth knows, as well as he knows that himſelf is alive. For, through beholding by faith the love of the Father in giving his own Son for us, the love of the Son in laying down his life for us, the precioufneſs of the life, the virtue of the blood, and richneſs of the redemption thereby obtained, the heart is invincibly overcome to love the Lord with ſuch a love as it never knew before; ſo that from that time ſin becomes the object of his fixed hatred, and never more has dominion over his will. I do not ſay it never more vexes, diſturbs, or grieves him; for the more he loves God, the more his heart will loathe the appearance of ſinful pollution. But the holy ſeed remains in him, ſo that ſin never more reigns over him, Rom. vi. 14. He now caſts off all allegiance to the uſurper, and returns to his rightful ſovereign with humble confeſſion, ſaying, *O Lord our God, other lords beſides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.* Thus every one that comes to Jeſus, puts off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, *that he no longer ſhould live the reſt of his time in the fleſh to the luſts of men, but to the will of God.* And every believer in his baptiſm, which is a clear reſemblance of this waſhing of regeneration, approaches to God, confeſſing Chriſt to be the true fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, aſcribing all the glory to him who *loved the church, and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word, that he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be holy, and without blemiſh.*

13. In

13. In baptiſm is repreſented the tranſlation of the children of God, from the power of darkneſs into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Paſſing through the water, is an expreſs figure of our paſſing from one life to another, from one kingdom to another. That is, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Chriſt, from a life of enmity and alienation, to a life of love and peace with God, which is the ſame with regeneration, or being born of God. The unregenerate ſoul has a life of ſome kind, but it is what will certainly end in death. Some live upon ſenſual gratification; ſome live upon earthly enjoyments; ſome live upon the honour they receive from men; ſome live upon religion; ſome live upon empty ſpeculations of Chriſt; ſome live upon the orthodoxy of their opinions, while others live upon their frames and feelings, or the exhileration of their paſſions; and others live upon their good diſpoſitions and heavenly inclinations. But the ſoul that enjoys the life of faith, lives upon none of theſe deluſive phantaſms. Upon Chriſt alone he lives, by the faith of the Son of God, God dwelling in him and he in God. And this ſpiritual life none can attain, unleſs they be born again. As in the nature birth the child is perfectly ſeparated from the womb in which he was held, and brought forth into the open light and free breathing air, ſo in the ſpiritual birth the ſoul is perfectly ſeparated from the old principle, in which he lived before; from a ſtate of darkneſs, enmity, carnality, ſelf-will, guilt, painful fear, and falſe confidence, or whatſoever held him from God, and is brought forth into the pure light and vital ſpirit of the kingdom of the Son of God. Thus every one that receives the goſpel in truth, is paſſed from death unto life, through the faith of the operation of

God. *Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God.* And this faith is produced by the *incorruptible ſeed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* Through the ſpecial power of the ſpirit of life; *by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* This ſpiritual operation is thus expreſſed by the Lord: *Except a man be born of water, and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Every one that underſtands in truth what ſpirit and life is, does certainly know that what our Lord in this place calls *water*, does not intend natural or common water, for that cannot poſſibly effect any operation on the intellectual powers. And if any one knows the ſcriptures, wherein the word of God is ſo frequently called or compared to water, he cannot be at a loſs to know that the water here intended is the word of truth, Deut. xxxii. 2. Eph. v. 26. For it is by this ſtream the knowledge of God is communicated, Joh. iv. 10, 14.—xvii. 3. And by the ſpecial influence of the ſpirit of truth, the ſoul receives the word in its quickening power, Joh. vi. 63. 1 Cor. vi. 17. And of this vital change, or paſſing of the ſoul from death to life, the ordinance of baptiſm is a lively figure.

14. BAPTISM, by the apoſtle Peter, is called a figure of our ſalvation. When ſpeaking of Noah, and the ſouls that were ſaved with him in the ark, he ſaith, *The like figure whereunto even baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us, (not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.* Here the ark of Noah is repreſented as a figure, and baptiſm is repreſented as another figure of the ſame thing, namely, the ſalvation of God by Jeſus Chriſt. Salvation

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is to be considered as consisting of four branches: 1. From the condemnation of hell. Some say God's elect could not be saved from hell, as they never were there. But this is only a quibble; for though they were not in the state that the damned shall be after the last judgement, they all remember themselves to be in the hell of sin and darkness, and to have such a hell in their consciences as must inevitably have sunk them down to the infernal lake, had not the Mediator interposed. 2. They are saved from the dominion of sin; for where the grace of God in Christ takes place in the heart, sin reigns no more in that soul. 3, They are saved from the body of death, or the plague and ill savour of sin remaining in their natures; for they shall grow in grace, till the body of sin shall be destroyed. 4. They are saved from mortality at the last day, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead; the two former every believer in his baptism professes to be saved from already; the two latter he professes in firm assurance to be waiting for. The family of Noah, by first entering the ark, for a space remaining in it, and then being brought out of it, enjoyed a real corporeal and temporal salvation, being carried out of the wretchedness of the old world, and introduced into the happiness of the new, which was a figure of the true spiritual and eternal salvation by Jesus Christ. For the sheep of Christ, through the faith of Jesus, are carried out of the state of sin and misery into the blessedness of the heavenly kingdom, 2 Cor. v. xvii. So baptism, as it is a going down into the water, being covered with it, and coming up out of it, is a striking resemblance or a lively figure of this salvation. It is not the act of baptism, but the thing thereby signified, that is, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ*, whereby

whereby we are ſaved. For the outward form paſſes only upon the body, whereas he tells us it is *not the putting away of the filth of the fleſh*. Then it can be of no avail but what it is to the intellectual part, which can be no other way than by faith, beholding the ſubſtance through the ſhadow, and therein confeſſing our faith in the ſalvation of God through Chriſt, which he calls *the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God*; and there can be no good conſcience but what is purified by faith, which the believer teſtifies in baptiſm

THERE is alſo another figure of like importance, which, by way of alluſion, is called baptiſm; that is, the paſſing of the children of Iſrael under the cloud and through the ſea, whereby they were ſaved from the Egyptian bondage, and brought into full liberty under the immediate protection of God, which in itſelf was a real ſalvation in their preſent circumſtances; yet it was intended as a figure of the ſame thing that baptiſm is, that is, of our eternal ſalvation by the ſon of God. And hence it is ſaid of them, *And were all baptized unto Moſes, in the cloud, and in the ſea.* Moſes was a type of the holy One that was to come, and by his hand they were led through thoſe things which to them were ſhadows of the ſame grace and eternal ſalvation as baptiſm now is to us. Thus the believer by faith follows his Lord through the outward ſign in view of the living ſubſtance, by which he is brought out of a ſtate of bondage and deſtruction, into a ſtate of ſalvation, life and peace.

15. BAPTISM in water is given us as a lively figure of the precious promiſe of the Father, called *The baptiſm of the*

the Holy Ghoſt. This is the life and glory of the whole goſpel being the richeſt bleſſing that ever came down from heaven upon the ſons of men. But ſome may ſay, Can it be a richer bleſſing than Chriſt himſelf? I reply, this queſtion proceeds from ignorance of Chriſt. Chriſt is the eſſence of all the riches in heaven and earth; but the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt is the higheſt opening of the riches of Chriſt that is poſſible to men in a mortal ſtate. This is that plenteous effuſion of the ſpirit ſo abundantly promiſed in the Old Teſtament, both reſpecting the immenſe fulneſs, *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring.* And alſo reſpecting the univerſal extent, *And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, that I will pour out my ſpirit upon all fleſh.* But theſe promiſes, relating to the higheſt manifeſtations of his grace, never could be fulfilled to any man till Chriſt ſat on the right hand of the Father. *For the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.* But after the Son of God was ſet on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens, then the promiſed glory was revealed. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear.* The firſt communications of this peculiar bleſſing were accompanied with viſible ſigns, which might be ſeen and heard, to convince the world that the promiſe was fulfilled; but now thoſe viſible ſigns are no longer neceſſary, notwithſtanding there is no declenſion in the ſubſtance, for that will continue the ſame as it was in the days of the apoſtles to the end of the world, Iſai. lix. 21.

ALL the things before mentioned, of which baptiſm is a figure, relate to our deliverance from ſin and miſery; or being called out of darkneſs into light, and are the effect of what Chriſt performed for us in his fleſh here upon earth. But the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt is of a ſuperior nature; nor was it procured by any performance for us; nor has it any relation to ſalvation from ſin, but is a pure ſpiritual gift, proceeding ſpontaneous from our Father which is in heaven, to them that are already bleſſed with the grace of ſalvation, to enrich their ſouls with the knowledge of the bleſſings and glories of the heavenly kingdom, Eph. i. 17, 18. To introduce them into the nearneſs of their filial relation to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. And that the joy of the Lord may be fulfilled in them, through ſpecial vital communion with the Father and the Son, Joh. xvi. 14, 15. 1 Joh. i. 3. Every believer that ever was ſince the world began, was bleſſed with the ſpirit of faith, and with whatever pertains to everlaſting ſalvation. But none of the ſaints or prophets ever enjoyed this ſpirit of truth, adoption, and glory, till Jeſus was exalted far above all heavens, Joh. xvi. 7. Even John the Baptiſt, than whom there never had been a greater prophet, nor any that ever ſpake ſo fully of the great Baptizer, yet acknowledged that he had not received this abundant overflow of the ſpirit, ſaying to the Lord, *I have need to be baptized of thee.* And the Lord himſelf affirms, that every believer in the New Teſtament church, is bleſſed with bleſſings ſuperior to what John the Baptiſt ever was. *For I ſay unto you, among thoſe that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: but he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God is greater than he.* I know the generality

rality of preachers and profeſſors exert all their art to oppoſe this doctrine: becauſe they do not enjoy it, they ſhew their enmity againſt it; but it ſhines ſo clear in the goſpel, that they cannot withſtand it. Therefore, with all the ſlight of men, and cunning craftineſs, they endeavour to depreciate its excellency, to diminiſh its glory, and to cauſe the truth thereof to diſappear; or elſe to contract the promiſe, as if it extended only to ſome very few, ſo as Chriſtians are not now to expect it. But this is blaſphemy againſt the Son of God, who has indefinitely promiſed the bleſſing to all that believe, and appointed all his diſciples to be baptized in the faith thereof. *He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.*

THIS is the grand point to which the figure of water baptiſm is directed, for here the chief ſtreſs was laid by John the Baptiſt. *I indeed have baptized you with water, but he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt.* And he declared that this teſtimony he received from God. *He that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the ſpirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt.* And Jeſus, before his aſcenſion, ſaid to his diſciples, *John truly baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, not many days hence.* And when Peter had ſeen this gift of God poured on the Gentiles, he ſaid; *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid, John indeed baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt.* So then, every man that receives the goſpel, and is baptized according to the command of the

Chriſt of God, is baptized in the faith of the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, Act. ii. 38.

THUS the ordinance of baptiſm, (which in itſelf is only an outward ſign or ſhadow) is a moſt ſacred appointment of the Lord, being a repreſentation of things moſt great, moſt excellent, moſt glorious; ſo clearly ſhewing forth the fulneſs of the holy One, and ſo peculiarly intereſting to the believing ſoul.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THIS is an ordinance of equal importance with baptiſm, inſtituted by the ſame authority, the command of the Lord of glory, and appointed to the ſame end, to manifeſt, in a lively figure, the fulneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and for his diſciples therein to confeſs his name, their union with him, and living perpetually by the faith of the Son of God. It is equally ſacred, of equal extent, and equal uſe with baptiſm. As both ordinances are certain modes of preaching Chriſt to our underſtandings, expreſſing, by figures, thoſe things which are by ſpeech and writing more directly expreſſed in the goſpel, and are directed to the diſciples of Jeſus, and to them only, as it is impoſſible for any to touch them except believers, but what they will profane the holy name of Chriſt.

BUT though theſe two ordinances are the ſame in ſubſtance and deſign, yet in mode, circumſtances, and particular repreſentations, they differ from each other. None

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can be regular disciples of Jesus, who do not attend to them both. For they cannot pay a due regard to the words of Christ, but they will find these to be his commandments, and will see the order in which, and the end for which they are appointed. Baptism is first in order, as it is the initiating ordinance, and represents the believers entrance into the house of God; without it no man can have a place in the visible church. Breaking bread is a continued ordinance to them that are inhabitants in the house of God, and therefore cannot be done in order till the other first takes place. Baptism is to be done only once, as the things thereby represented can only once be wrought. The Lord's supper is to be often repeated, as the things represented continue to the end. Baptism is to be administered singly, as God's elect are gathered one by one. The Lord's supper is to be administered socially, to shew the unity of the body when they are gathered in one. Baptism is an operation upon the person, to shew the powerful operation of the word of grace, through the special energy of the spirit of life, in bringing us to God. The Lord's supper is a communication to the persons, to shew the perpetual communications of grace, to cause us to grow up into the fulness of Christ. Baptism supposes persons coming up out of a state of sin and death, and represents the bringing of them to Christ in spirit. The Lord's supper supposes them to be already united to Christ, and represents all the blessings proceeding from God, to bring them to the full enjoyment of Christ in glory. In baptism, the minister acknowledges the subject as a disciple of Christ, and the subject acknowledges the minister as one sent of the Lord. In the Lord's supper, the people acknowledge each other

as members of the ſame body, and the miniſter acknowledges them as the lambs of Chriſt, and they acknowledge him as a miniſter of the New Teſtament.

IN this ordinance of breaking bread, (though in itſelf only a ſhadow) are repreſented ſpiritual things, and the figure extends to eternal things, Matt. xxvi. 29. And therein we confeſs the holy One of God; we confeſs what we believe of the Lord Jeſus, what he himſelf is, what he has done for us, what he freely gives us, in what relation we ſtand to the Chriſt of God, what we now enjoy in him, and what we hope for in the life to come. For, in coming to his table, we confeſs him to be the fountain of all our ſupplies, and declare ourſelves to be the children of his love, with a fixed dependence on him as belonging to his family, and having a right to all the bleſſings of his houſe. For all the riches of grace and glory reſide in himſelf, in whom we now enjoy the bleſſings of grace and truth, and by whom we expect to be bleſſed with all the perfection of everlaſting life and glory. And thus, while we attend to theſe viſible ſigns, the eye of our mind is fixed on the ſpiritual ſubſtance therein held forth to us.

1. THE time of the inſtitution of this ordinance was very ſignificant. It was the night of the paſſover, which was an ordinance commanded to Iſrael on a very awful occaſion, the ſlaughter of all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, and bringing out the armies of Iſrael with an high hand and an almighty outſtretched arm. So was this at a very awful period. The night in which our Lord Jeſus was betrayed into the hands of ſinners; when he was immediately

ately to launch forth into the depth of ſufferings, to bear the heavieſt of all ſorrows, and to be cruſhed with the moſt tremendous agonies for our ſakes, that by his ſtripes we might be healed, and ſet free from the moſt intolerable bondage. And herein was love manifeſted in very deed! That when the Lord knew he was juſt going to fall under the fierceſt wrath, to be tortured with the moſt excruciating pain, and ſuſtain the moſt tormenting anguiſh that ever was felt by any being, and that, entirely for our iniquities and rebellions; even at that very time that he ſhould expreſs the moſt tender compaſſion and invariable kindneſs, the moſt exquiſite love and ſincere affection! This ſuperlative love every believer, drawing nigh to God in this ordinance, does celebrate with the higheſt gratitude, and with all his ſoul; yea, with the deepeſt humility, ſelf-abaſement and ſelf-abhorrence, yet with the moſt elevated joy and heavenly delight, crying out, Behold, what manner of love is this!

2. THE order. *When the hour was come, he ſat down, and the twelve apoſtles with him.* This was to expreſs the unity of the body, Chriſt the head, and all his diſciples as members, ſtanding in an indiviſible union with the Lord, and with one another. For no ſchiſm can be in this body, for all his children are of his fleſh and of his bones, being one ſpirit with him, and the ſame with one another, Rom. xii. 5. No ſeparation is poſſible; they are all one in the eternal counſel, Eph. i. 4. All one in covenant, when the Father ſent the Son into the world, Iſai. xlii. 6. And all one in ſpirit, when they believe on the Son of God, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Chriſt and his ſaints have all but one life, Joh. xiv. 19. One kingdom, Luke xxii. 29. One everlaſting

everlaſting habitation, Joh, xiv. 2, 3. And one eternal glory, Joh. xvii. 22. Theſe things are excellently repreſented to us in this glorious ordinance; for it was the good pleaſure of the Lord to ratify to his diſciples, in lively figures, thoſe things which he had ſpoken to them in his doctrine. And ſitting down together as one family, with the Lord at the head, repreſents our ſitting ſpiritually with Chriſt in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6. as alſo our ſitting with him in the manſions of eternal glory, Luke xxii. 30. Thus drawing nigh to God in this ordinance, we confeſs the very truth of union in the love of the Father, in the fulneſs of the Son, in the power of the ſpirit of truth, and in the glory which ſhall be revealed when Jeſus ſhall appear.

3. THE nature of the feaſt. It was held at night, and called a ſupper, not a dinner, which is uſually eaten to ſtrengthen men for labour. It is true, the ſaints, by feeding upon Chriſt, are made ſtrong to walk in his name all the day, Zech. x. 12. But this is called, by way of peculiar eminence, *The Lord's Supper*, becauſe it is to ſhew the perpetual feaſt, which ſhall continue till all labour ſhall be compleatly finiſhed, and they ſhall be ſafely landed in eternal reſt, Heb. iv. 10. Every believer, when he comes to eat the fleſh and drink the blood of Jeſus, finds the Son of God to be his life, and for ever ceaſes to ſeek life by his own works, or to go about any more to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs, Phil. iii. 9. And after he has received the promiſe of the Father, he ceaſes from that painful labour which young Chriſtians often find, and which the diſciples found, while the Lord was with them, to underſtand the meaning of many things which were ſpoken to them

them by the Lord, Joh. xiv. 26.—xvi. 13. This is the reſt of which the land of promiſe was a type, and which the apoſtle ſo earneſtly admoniſhes the Hebrews to ſeek and wait for. The ſoul being richly anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, he finds it to be a baptiſm of fire, which kindles his heart into a vital flame of love, melts him into deep humility, and burns up thoſe low and carnal conceptions which heretofore he had of the kingdom of God. His ſoul now aſcends like pillars of ſmoke, perfumed with the ſavour of the incenſe, which ariſes out of the hand of the great interceſſor. With ſerenity of mind, heavenly delight, and enlargedneſs of heart, to behold the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt, and the happy feaſt of divine love ſhall cauſe us to grow till we be ripe for eternal glory. Then ſhall we feaſt anew with Chriſt in the kingdom of his Father, in endleſs reſt, peace, and joy. Theſe things are ſet before the believer in this ſacred ordinance, it being an expreſſive ſhadow to repreſent the eternal living ſubſtance.

4. THE body of Chriſt, that is, the fulneſs of the Godhead in the man, is repreſented by the bread, as he ſaid, *This is my body.* And again, *The bread which I give is my fleſh.* This is not the particular article called fleſh, in diſtinction from the bone, or other conſtituent parts of the body; nor yet the whole numerical body, as diſtinguiſhed from the ſoul and ſpirit; nor even the whole human nature, ſimply conſidered as abſtrated from the divine eſſence, but the very Chriſt of God, Immanuel, the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in the man. For notwithſtanding the manhood of Chriſt was in very deed irreprehenſibly perfect, Heb. vii. 26. it is abſolutely impoſſible, that

that created nature ſhould be poſſeſſed of ſuch virtue in itſelf as to give eternal life to any being, Joh. vi. 54. It is the word made fleſh, or God manifeſt in the fleſh; that is, the human nature filled with all the fulneſs of the divine nature, that the heart and ſoul of every believer feeds upon by faith. It is ſpiritually, mentally in the underſtanding; the ſoul beholds the infinite riches that dwells in the holy One of God, and from thence receives eternal life. If Chriſt were not the abſolute God, no bleſſing of eternal life could proceed from him: and if he were not perfect man, he could not convey thoſe bleſſings to us. This is the great myſtery of godlineſs, yet there is not a believer under heaven that does not know it; for it is not poſſible that any creature ſhould be in a ſtate of ſalvation, who does not believe it with all his heart, even ſo as ſpiritually to eat it, and live upon it with all his ſoul, Joh. vi. 53. Therefore when Jeſus ſpeaks of his fleſh, or of his body, nothing leſs is intended than the infinite eternal perfection of the divine being, by an indiviſible union, inhabiting the nature of man in perfection: and every one that comes to this ordinance in faith, beholds the Son of God in this light.

5. JESUS took the bread: that is, he preſented it before God and before his diſciples; a lively ſign and figure of himſelf, in his mediatorial capacity, preſented to his Father and preſented to his church. He was ſet apart, devoted, ſanctified, ſent, and given of the Father to his church, to be bread of life to every ſoul that believeth, Joh. vi. 27. And he preſents himſelf to his choſen as his Father's gift, and as their eternal life, Joh. x. 10. And at the head of his church, as their repreſentative, he preſents

ſents himſelf a ſacrifice to God, Heb. ix. 14. And he preſents them in himſelf as one body and one bread, Iſai. viii. 18.—1 Cor. x. 17. Jeſus is in every light preſented as the delight of his Father, and as the life of his church lifted up as an enſign, in whom we behold the ample perfection of the Mediator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Saviour, High-prieſt, Advocate, Interceſſor, and every deſirable office or quality. For we feed upon him in every light, and in every capacity, while we behold him in his perſonal excellency, his union with his Father, and his ſpecial union with his church, Joh. i. 14.

6. He bleſſed the bread, or he gave thanks. Herein he ſhewed, that all the bleſſedneſs poſſeſſed by the Son is the bounty of the Father; and this is acknowledged by every believer that draws nigh to God in this ordinance: for none can believe in the Son, who does not believe that he proceeded from, and lives by the Father, Joh. vi. 57. Hence it is alſo evident, that Jeſus has a right to aſk the Father what he will; and whatever bleſſing he is pleaſed to aſk for his diſciples, it is the Father's pleaſure to give. He muſt aſk the bleſſing from the Father, for he never profeſſed to poſſeſs any thing of himſelf but what he receives from the Father. Yet it is ſaid he bleſſed it, to ſhew that whatever bleſſings he receives from his Father, he has power to communicate to his choſen. And in that it is ſaid he gave thanks, it ſhews that he aſcribes all glory to his Father, both for all the fulneſs that dwells in himſelf, and for all the favours beſtowed on his body, the church. And they are herein taught to look to the Father by Jeſus Chriſt for every ſpiritual bleſſing, as well as to give thanks by Jeſus Chriſt to the Father, for every

communication of his grace. It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell, and that of his fulneſs all we ſhould receive.

7. HE brake the bread, to ſignify the breaking of his body for his church. As ſaith the prophet, *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities.* His body was really broken, as it is written in the pſalms, *All my bones are out of joint.* Yet his body was not ſeparated, for his myſtical body, head and members are never to be divided, nor a bone of him was broken, to ſhew that his power did never fail, but is the ſame for ever, Joh. x. 18. And it was not his outward man only, or his viſible members that were broken for us, but his very ſoul was poured out unto death, his heart within him was melted. He bare our ſins in his own body, and his ſoul was made an offering for ſin. His blood made atonement for our tranſgreſſions, and his life was taken from the earth. Thus the holy One of God was pleaſed to give us a ſign of his deep ſufferings for our redemption, whereby we are delivered from the curſe, and raiſed up from the death of condemnation to a life of righteouſneſs and peace with God, Dan. ix. 24. But this is not that eternal life of the moſt exalted perfection, wherein we ſhall behold and enjoy the Father and the Son in immortal glory. For that was not produced by his ſufferings, but is his own eſſential perfection, Iſai. lx. 19. His ſufferings removed the obſtacle, that is ſin, and deſtroyed the death which we by ſin had brought upon ourſelves. But the very being of the Godhead in the man is the inheritance of the ſaints, the life of eternal glory given to us, 1 Joh. v. 11, 20.

8. HE

8. He gave it to his diſciples, to ſhew that all the bleſſings which his children enjoy are free gifts from the Father of lights. All that Chriſt is, all that his word contains, all that his ſpirit communicates, all that Chriſt obtained by his performances in the body, all that he receives through his interceſſion before the throne, all the grace the ſaints receive while in the world, and all the glory they ſhall enjoy in the world to come, are all one perfect gift, emphatically called *eternal life*. And every ſoul that receives any ſpiritual bleſſing, knows it to be the free gift of the Father in the Son. For they that are bleſſed with heavenly bleſſings, are never kept in darkneſs, ſo as not to know whence thoſe bleſſings proceed. Ignorance, and ſpiritual enjoyments, are incompatible one with the other. No creature ever did enjoy any thing of a ſpiritual nature, but what was in the underſtanding. Wherever that doctrine prevails, that perſons may have the grace of God and not know it, or whence it proceeds, or how they received it, there the prince of darkneſs reigns. Jeſus has told us and ſhewn us, that all theſe things are freely given, and every child of light acknowledges the gift, and bleſſes the giver. And every one that comes to the table of the Lord, to partake of the outward elements there freely diſpenſed; does thereby confeſs the freeneſs of the Father's gift, conveyed in the Son of his love, and ſealed to us by the ſpirit of holineſs, and that with gratitude he receives the benefit.

9 He ſaid, *Take eat*. Every one that receives Chriſt, does freely take, or embrace with all his ſoul. For they know their want, they know the true bread which the Lord gives, and they feel the ſpiritual ſenſations of hunger,

and they receive him with all their heart, and feed with the utmoſt delight. No ſpiritual bleſſing ever was inſenſibly conveyed; for it muſt be revealed to the underſtanding, and fully approved, before it can be received. Heavenly bleſſings are not given, or received, in any occult, fantaſtick, or enthuſiaſtick way, but ſet forth in the moſt open light; and their excellency commended to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God: ſo that they are received with all the heart, with full conſent of the will, and to ample ſatisfaction of all the mental powers. He bids them *eat*, ſaying, *This is my body*. And they eat with delight, knowing the ſalutary virtue thereof: that his body or his human nature, contains all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. And the Lord aſſures all his diſciples, that this his body is broken for them. Not only broken by the juſtice of God, for their ſins, but now broken or rightly divided in his goſpel; ſo as their ſouls may truly, freely, and bleſſedly feed thereon. This eating is intellectual, as the body receives natural food, ſo the mind receives the truth of the fulneſs of Chriſt. As the taſte is delighted with corporeal meat, ſo the mind is delighted with the riches of grace, which by faith it beholds in the Son of God. As the body cheweth the natural food, ſo the mind looks into the truths of Chriſt; divides, ſubdivides, and turns them over in every light, that he may come to the ſweetneſs thereof, and enter into the deep things of God. As the body ſwallows down the aliment which it receives, ſo the powers of the ſoul open, to receive into the inner man, all the light, life, truth, peace, righteouſneſs, holineſs, riches, comfort, hope, &c. that is in Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. And this every believer confeſſes, in coming

to

to the Lord's table, and waits to be nouriſhed, refreſhed, and ſtrengthened thereby.

10. THE cup was preſented; that is, the liquid therein contained, which was wine, for the Lord afterward called it, *This fruit of the vine.* A ſignificant repreſentation of the blood of the Lamb, by which we are redeemed. As the red wine has much the reſemblance of blood, it is called, *The pure blood of the grape.* It is the virtue of the vine and of the grape which makes the wine ſo rich and ſalutary, ſo it is the perfection of the precious nature of the Son of God, that gives ſuch efficacy to his blood. It is called God's own blood, Act. xx. 28. Therefore by this blood we have redemption, peace, remiſſion of ſins, juſtification, purification of conſcience, and acceſs into the preſence of God. Not that any man in the uſe of his reaſon can imagine, that blood ſhould pertain to the eſſence of the Godhead; but Chriſt being God in our nature, man filled with the fulneſs of God, Immanuel, God with us, all that he is, all that he ſpake, all that he did, all that he ſuffered, all that he communicates, or whatſoever pertains to him, or proceeds from him, hath in it all the perfection of the divine eſſence. But when we aſcribe all this virtue to the blood of Jeſus, we do not conſider his material blood as ſeparate from his perſon, but we intend the perfect ſacrifice of himſelf, his ſufferings, his death, the laying down of his life, which terminated in the ſhedding of his precious blood, by which our redemption is purchaſed.

11. THIS cup he took, to ſhew that his blood is freely and openly preſented before God and before his people, Himſelf

Himſelf is now entered into the Holieſt by his own blood, whereby he pleads eternal redemption for us. And his blood is perpetually preſented in the goſpel to all that believe, for their peace and ſtrong conſolation. Before the throne he appears our advocate with the Father, as a lamb that has been ſlain, maintaining our cauſe by ſhewing the virtue of his blood, which was ſhed in our ſtead for our iniquities, whereby all our ſins are blotted out, never more to appear before God. It is true, an advocate may loſe a cauſe; it may be for want of pleading faithfully, for want of pleading wiſely, or for want of a good cauſe to plead. But this can never be the caſe with our great Advocate. He is a faithful High-prieſt, he perfectly knows the law, and his plea is his own precious blood, which through the eternal ſpirit was offered without ſpot to God. And the ſame precious blood that pleads for us before the throne of God, pleads with equal power in the conſcience of every believer, through the witneſſing of the ſpirit of Jeſus.

12. HE gave Thanks. Whereby he manifeſtly acknowledged, that this blood of the everlaſting covenant, with all the excellency therein contained, and all the bleſſings from thence proceeding, are of the rich love and grace of the Father. The Father is the origin of all the bleſſedneſs that is in the Son, of all the grace and truth that abounds in the Holy One; and of all the ſalvation, grace, and glory, that flows from him to his church, in time and eternity, John xvii. 7. It was the Father that ſanctified the Son, and ſent him into the world; it was the Lord that laid on him the iniquity of us all; it was God that delivered him for our offences; and it was the Father that raiſed

raiſed him again for our juſtification. It was the Father dwelling in him, that ſuſtained him through all his bitter agonies, and made his ſufferings efficacious to the taking away of our ſins, and giving us peace with God. It is the Father who hath ſet him at his own right hand, far above all principality and power, and hath conſtituted him our high prieſt for ever. And it is the Father that hath born record of his Son, that we might believe on the beloved of his ſoul; and that believing, we might have life through his name.

13. HE gave it to his diſciples. To ſhew that all the bleſſings of his kingdom are freely given, and that no good thing is withheld. For what can be dearer than his blood; that is, his life? *Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.* Himſelf was freely given to us, his life was freely given for us. Redemption, remiſſion of ſins, righteouſneſs, and peace with God, are all free gifts. His word of ſalvation, his holy ſpirit, eternal life, and the glory of the everlaſting kingdom, are all freely given. There is nothing that is poſſeſſed by him that is heir of all things, but what he freely gives to his choſen; nor is there any thing that his children ever did, now do, or ever ſhall enjoy, but what is freely given them of God, by Jeſus Chriſt the Lord. For we had nothing in creation but what came from God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt; and what bleſſings were then beſtowed on us, we have vilely caſt away by ſin; ſo that we are now ſo far from having any wiſdom, power, or virtue, to merit any thing from God, that we have no good thing remaining in us, nor even power to regain the leaſt of what we have loſt; and if it be impoſſible for us to recover the bleſſings which we once had, which

were

were only natural bleſſings, how ſhould it be poſſible for us to do the leaſt thing, to procure the ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings? *All things are of God*, who gave his own Son, and with him freely gives us all things.

14. HE ſaid unto them, *Drink ye all of it.* Hence we ſee, it is freely given to every diſciple of Chriſt, plentifully to receive the blood of Jeſus, and all the comforts flowing therefrom. To drink, is to receive freely into the body, whatever liquid is propoſed, or given. So the believer receives freely into his ſoul, with pleaſure and ſatisfaction, the blood of the Son of God. A thirſty man knows with what reliſh he drinks a pleaſant cordial liquor; ſo a ſoul, laden with the burthen of ſin, ſcorched with the fiery law, and wearied with labouring in vain to deliver himſelf; when the virtue of the blood of the lamb ſlain, is opened to him in the goſpel, and his heart is opened to behold by faith the excellency thereof, and how perfectly it is adapted for his relief, and how freely it flows to every thirſty ſoul; he drinks it into his underſtanding, into his affections, and into his conſcience, with all his intellectual power, with the higheſt delight, and to his ſtrongeſt conſolation; it removes the guilt, fills his heart with love to God, breaks the bands of iniquity, and ſets him free from the dominion of ſin. And as blood is the life, the life of Jeſus is thus communicated, and becomes new life in the ſoul; and every believer under heaven does very well know, what freſh life he receives in his ſoul, by drinking the life of Jeſus. But it may be ſaid, ſurely the heat, the burden, and labour of the ſoul, does not continue during life. I anſwer, the guilt and wrath ceaſes, when the perſon is bleſſed with a lively faith in Chriſt; and until this is the

caſe,

caſe, he has no right to approach to this ordinance; as he cannot confeſs the virtue of the blood of Jeſus, ſo long as he has not truly taſted it. Yet he continues to drink this precious blood, with delight, all his days; as it is the joy and peace of his ſoul, and his way into the Holieſt; and never can be forgotten. And in remembrance thereof, he attends the Supper of the Lord.

15. He ſaid, *This is my blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins.* Almoſt all things under the Old Teſtament were purged with blood; which being only the blood of beaſts, could not make the worſhippers perfect. But this is the blood of the New Teſtament, of which it is ſaid, *But Chriſt being come an High Prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* The old covenant made nothing perfect, being only a ſhadow of good things to come. But the new covenant is life and ſubſtance; and every thing pertaining to it is perfection; and is ratified by the precious blood of the only begotten of the Father, Heb. xiii. 20. This blood was ſhed for many; even for the univerſal world, Heb. ii. 9. For thro' the virtue of this blood, the ſin of Adam, in every ſenſe, is perfectly extirpate from every man upon earth, 1 Cor. xv. 22. And how far it is efficacious, reſpecting the perſonal ſins of all men; it is for us to be modeſt in our aſſertions, rather than perverſely to diſpute about things too deep for us. Certain it is, that in the virtue of this blood, the goſpel is preached to every creature

which is under heaven; ſo that every man that hears the goſpel, and diſregards it, is left without excuſe; and ſhall be judged by it in the laſt day, Joh. xii. 48. Yet doubtleſs, in the moſt peculiar ſenſe, this precious blood was ſhed for God's Elect, Joh. x. 15.—Eph. v. 25. For by one offering, they are all perfected for ever, Heb. x. 14. It was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins. Not a partial remiſſion of ſins, for it comes from God as his ſpecial gift without repentance, Rom. xi. 29; and every one that believes in the name of Jeſus, receives this gift from the bountiful hand of the Father, Act. x. 43. Nor yet as a conditional remiſſion of ſins; for though it is to every one that believeth, that faith is the gift of God, and depends not on the will, or power, or virtue of any creature, Rom. ix. 16. To whomſoever remiſſion of ſins is granted, their iniquities are remembered no more, but they ſtand acquitted for ever, Heb. x. 18. The Lord loves them freely; there is no more condemnation. It is God that juſtifieth; it is Chriſt that died, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Therefore that ſoul never more feels the condemning wrath of God reſting with horror upon his conſcience, nor the power of ſin reigning in his heart.

THIS is the ordinance which our Lord was pleaſed to leave with us, whereby to confeſs his name, and keep his love in mind, ſaying, *This do ye in remembrance of me.* Here we commemorate the abſolute perfection of the perſon whom the Father gave unto us, the precioufneſs of the life which the Son laid down for us, the conſtancy of the ſupply with which he perpetually feeds us, and the glorious feaſt which he is preparing for us in his Father's kingdom, Mat. xxvi. 29. As for the carnal religious

world,

world, they may talk of these things in an external loose way, but their minds are so foreign to any thing that is spiritual, 1 Cor. ii, 14, and their conceptions of the things of the kingdom of God so low and earthly, Joh. viii. 23, 43, that their hearts can never enter the spirit and life of these things. Their practice of the worship of God, and the ordinances of Christ, differs as much from the true design, as the most silly child's play differs from the substantial works of men; for they can form no ideas of the glory and majesty of that divine Being who is life and spirit. But the spiritual man judgeth spiritually, and beholds by faith the truth of the kingdom of God. And while his senses are employed about the sign, his heart feeds upon the living substance.

LAYING ON OF HANDS.

THIS is a confession of our faith in the promise of the Father, Luke xxiv. 49, which he promised to be fulfilled by the Son, Joh. i. 33, that is the baptism, the gift, or the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Joh. xv. 26, and is certain to be communicated to every soul that believes in Jesus, according to the light of the New Testament, Joh. vii. 38, 39.—Act. ii. 38.

FOR, notwithstanding men of every denomination have agreed in the spirit of Satan to pour contempt upon the promise of the Holy Ghost, by representing it in the most trifling contemptible light that wit and enmity against Christ can invent, in order to depreciate the glory, and

deſtroy the life of the promiſe, it is not in their power to obſcure the glory in which it ſhines. Some tell us it was all fulfilled on the one day of pentecoſt, never before nor after. Some tell us it intended miraculous gifts only, and ceaſed when they ceaſed. Some tell us it only intends regeneration, and every one that is born again enjoys it. Some tell us it only intends miniſterial gifts. Some tell us it is to give believers aſſurance of their ſalvation. Some tell us it is an extraordinary gift vouchſafed to ſome peculiar believers of uncommon degree. And others apply it to thoſe extatic raptures and agitations of the mind, which religious people ſometimes ferment in themſelves through ſtrength of paſſion. But theſe are all inventions of the wicked one to make the promiſe invalid, and prevent ſouls from attending to it, and waiting for it. Nor can any man that reads the New Teſtament with underſtanding give his aſſent to thoſe vague amuſements; for the clear repreſentations in the word of God ſhew it to be very different from any of theſe. It was not the operation of one day, but a bleſſing that continues for ever, Iſai. lix. 21. It related not to outward ſigns, but to indwelling power, Joh. xiv. 17. It is not the ſame with regeneration, for it is an additional bleſſing given after ſouls are born again, Eph. i. 13. It is not the ſame with gifts for the miniſtry, for it belongs to all the children in the family, Gal. iv. 6. It is not to give perſons aſſurance of their ſalvation, for it is promiſed only to them that believe, and conſequently are already aſſured of their ſalvation, Act. xix. 2. It is not only given to ſome believers of uncommon ſanctity, but to every believer under heaven, Joel ii. 28, 29. It conſiſts not in enthuſiaſtic flights of imagination, but in the anointing and ſealing of the

ſpirit

ſpirit of truth, whereby the ſoul is eſtabliſhed in the life of holineſs, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. This ſpecial New Teſtament promiſe is to every child of God, to enrich, enlarge, and raiſe the ſoul into the fulneſs of the bleſſedneſs of the glories of the kingdom of God; though the religious world cannot believe that any ſuch bleſſings come from heaven, or that any man upon earth is ſo bleſſed.

THE promiſe is abundantly held forth in the Old Teſtament, and abundantly ratified in the New Teſtament, which makes it worthy to be called the promiſe of the Father. It is expreſſed in patent poſitive terms, adapted to the Son of God himſelf, and to all that the Father hath given him. To the Son it is ſaid, *The ſpirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him.—I have put my ſpirit upon him.—My ſpirit that is upon thee ſhall not depart*, &c. And to his diſciples it is ſaid, *Until the ſpirit be poured upon us from on high.—I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed.—I will pour out my ſpirit upon all fleſh*, &c. It is alſo expreſſed in ſtrong figures. To the Son it is ſaid, *God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.—He ſhall drink of the brook in the way.—Butter and honey ſhall he eat.* And to his Elect it is ſaid, *With joy ſhall ye draw water out of the wells of ſalvation.—There the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and ſtreams.—There ſhall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and ſtreams of water.—The mountains ſhall drop down new wine, and the hills ſhall flow with milk*, &c. &c. Thus every thing that is rich and excellent is freely declared in the promiſe, and as fully ratified in the New Teſtament. John the Baptiſt teſtified of Chriſt, *He ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and*

with

with fire. Jeſus teſtified, *Behold I ſend the promiſe of my Father upon you.* And the apoſtles teſtified, *Ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.*

BUT the the time when this promiſe was to be fulfilled is to be attended to. The promiſe was fulfilled upon the Son of God, when he was in the fleſh, employed in his Father's buſineſs. *The ſpirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek,* &c.—*Jeſus returned in the power of the ſpirit into Galilee.*—*How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power: who went about doing good,* &c. But to his diſciples it was not to be fulfilled, till Jeſus ſhould ſit on the throne of his glory. *For the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.*—*If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.*—*Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this,* &c.

IT is alſo to be conſidered to whom this promiſe is extended. It is to all fleſh, Act. ii. 17. But this cannot intend every individual of mankind; for there be many who remain enemies to God, and cannot receive his holy ſpirit. It is all the ſeed of Iſrael, Iſai. xlv. 25. But this is not to all the natural ſeed, *For they are not all Iſrael, which are of Iſrael.* But it is to all and every one of the children of promiſe; that is, to all the ſpiritual ſeed, of whatever nation, people, caſt, or tribe they be; of whatever age or ſex, in whatever ſtation or condition they be: if they be called by the goſpel to the fellowſhip of the Son

of

of God, they are heirs of the promiſe. *For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* Thus the definition is clear and determinate. That the promiſe cannot take place upon any but them that believe, as it is never made to any other; nor is it confined to any particular period of time or age of the world ſince the aſcenſion of our Lord, nor to any degree or ſtation of Chriſtians, or office of miniſters in the church, but is univerſal to every believer that has been, now is, or ever ſhall be, from the time that the Lord aſcended into his glory till his ſecond coming.

We may alſo enquire, what are the bleſſings contained in the promiſe? The bleſſings are of the higheſt nature that are poſſible to be communicated to mortal beings. In the Old Teſtament they are excellently pointed out, as an abundance of riches and glory that was to come; but none of the ſaints, kings, prieſts, or prophets, ever did enjoy them under that diſpenſation. No not John the Baptiſt himſelf, though the moſt excellent of all the prophets: yet as he did not live to ſee his Lord aſcended, he never obtained this glorious promiſe; but every believer that lives in theſe days is certain to receive it. The prophet Iſaiah, lxiv. 4, confeſſes it to be a glory which, in his days, none had ſeen ſince the creation of the world. But the apoſtle Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 10, declares, in theſe days, that God has revealed them to us by his ſpirit.

But the hypocrite cries out, O horrid! O dreadful! O uncharitable! O cenſorious! Are none real Chriſtians? Shall none be ſaved but ſuch as arrive at enjoyments ſuperior

perior to all the excellent men under the Old Teſtament? I anſwer, ſo it appears to all that believe what the God of truth hath ſaid. That which is the joy and glory of all that love Jeſus, is the ſting and torture of all thoſe that hate him. As we have no reaſon to believe that any were ſaved under the Old Teſtament who did not receive the truth contained in that Teſtament, neither have we any reaſon to believe that any ſhall be ſaved under the New Teſtament, who do not receive the truth contained in this Teſtament. It is well known, that by the kingdom of God, ſo often mentioned in the goſpel, is intended the opening of the bleſſedneſs when Jeſus aſcended into his glory. And the Lord declares, that a greater than John the Baptiſt had not been born of women, yet he affirms, *He that is leaſt in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.* Therefore we have no right to regard the outcries of the enemies of the goſpel, who are ſtrangers to the life and power, and cannot endure the light, but ſtrive with all their might to turn it into darkneſs. It is certain, the very leaſt ſaint under the New Teſtament is more abundantly enlarged into the glorious things of God, than the very greateſt was under the Old. This we cannot doubt, unleſs we diſpute the truth of him that cannot lie.

BUT the common profeſſor will object, that the believers under the Old Teſtament were bleſſed with regeneration; they were bleſſed with ſalvation; they knew their God; and what can Chriſtians enjoy more?

I reply, the ancient believers were born of God, and did certainly enjoy divine life: but they did not enjoy that more abundant life which Jeſus gives ſince he aſcended,

cended, Joh. x. 10. They did enjoy ſalvation, which is the extent of all that can be enjoyed reſpecting deliverance from ſin and death. But they did not enjoy that nearneſs of acceſs to the Father's boſom as the ſaints now do, Heb. ix. 8.—x. 19. They did know their God as certain and infallible as any believer can know him under the goſpel, but they did not know him in that clearneſs of ſuperlative excellency, light and glory, as he now ſhines in the open face of Jeſus Chriſt, 2 Cor. iv. 6. For the true light now ſhineth in the goſpel, ſo far ſuperior to what it did under the former diſpenſation, that unleſs the ſpirit were given in a more abundant meaſure than any of the ancient ſaints had ever received, no man could be able to behold the greatneſs of the glory. For unleſs the ſtrength of our ſight be proportioned to the glory of the object, we cannot ſtedfaſtly behold it. But I know the religious world ſee nothing of this exceeding weight of glory, or any need of ſuch enlargedneſs of ſoul in order to behold it. It is not expected that a blind man ſhould diſtinguiſh degrees of light, but all that follow the Lord of glory ſhall have the light of life. *The eyes of them that ſee ſhall not be dim.*

THERE is ſcarce any truth opened under the New Teſtament, but what was hinted at under the Old. But there was a vail caſt over them all, which vail is done away in Chriſt. And now the face of the covering being removed by the light of the New Teſtament, the glory of thoſe ancient promiſes appears with ſuch luſtre as it did not before the happy illuſtration by the glorious goſpel. The eternal love, counſels, purpoſes, and abundance of grace, treaſured from everlaſting in the infinite boſom of the abſolute I AM, did not appear as they now do in him that

is the image of the inviſible God. The deep myſtery of the divine incarnation was not made known as now it is. The eſſential union of the Father and the Son was not ſo clearly manifeſt as it is now. The covenant union between the Son and his choſen bride, in which they ſtood indiviſible in the ſight of the Father, through all the tranſactions which he performed in his body, did not appear open as we now behold it. The perfection of his interceſſion as our great High-prieſt before the throne of his Father, was not made manifeſt as it now ſhines in the glorious goſpel. The vital union between Chriſt and his choſen through the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we claim a filial right, and cry Abba, Father, and enjoy a conjugal relation with the Son, and a right of inheritance in all the glories of the world to come, was not made known as it is now revealed to the ſaints. The life eternal, now dwelling in the ſaints, which is Chriſt himſelf, and the glory that ſhall appear at his ſecond coming, &c. &c. theſe were myſteries hid in God, till the Son of his boſom made his appearance.

THE ſcripture in the theory thereof, as it is given in an hiſtorical way, is adapted to the natural underſtanding, and may be received by human reaſon. But in the truth, life, and power, *The things of God knoweth no man but the ſpirit of God.* Therefore the ſaints of the Old Teſtament muſt have the ſpirit of God in ſuch a meaſure as was ſufficient to guide their minds, to underſtand and receive the will of God, ſo far as it was then revealed. But now the light ſhines ſo much more abundant, Iſai. xxx. 26. it could not be underſtood by any man, without a more abundant effuſion of the ſpirit of truth, to illuminate the

mind

mind into the glorious myſteries of the goſpel. This is the ſpecial gift, which the Lord promiſed to his diſciples, and taught them to wait for. And for which they did ſo earneſtly pray and wait, Eph. i. 17, 18, 19.—iii. 16—19. Col. i. 9.—ii. 2, 3. And which all believers confeſs, and wait for in the ordinance of laying on of hands.

Now, in regard to laying on of hands, ſome perſons who have acknowledged it to be an apoſtolical practice, have viewed the glorious deſign, and with ſacred reverence, have followed the apoſtles therein, have ſtill doubted, whether they might call it an ordinance of the New Teſtament; becauſe they did not find it expreſsly commanded by the Lord, as the ordinances of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper are. I blame not their cautelous modeſty, for it becomes us to be very deliberate, in opening our lips, reſpecting any thing that relates to the kingdom of God, till we have truly examined, and digeſted, what light the word of God gives us in the caſe, Eccleſ. v. 2. But be it obſerved, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, were actually brought into practice, when the Lord commanded them. But laying on of hands, could not be done at that time, to the end the apoſtles did afterwards practiſe it, for the time was not come. And be it further conſidered, that the Lord gave to his apoſtles, power to bind and to looſe; as in the opening of their commiſſion, things might be found neceſſary; which could have no proper place, during his perſonal reſidence among them. Yet this power could never extend to any but the Lord's immediate witneſſes; for whatever could become neceſſary in the church, muſt certainly appear under their miniſtry, and it would have been the higheſt arrogance in any other, to have made any

additions; or, even the apoſtles themſelves, had they been living, after all viſion ceaſed, Rev. xxii. 18. But we find frequent mention made, of the commandments of the apoſtles; particularly, we ſee them exert their authority, in appointing an order of Deacons, when ſuch were found neceſſary; for which we find no direct commandment of the Lord. So likewiſe, at the proper time, laying on of hands appeared eligible to them; and accordingly, they practiſed it. And certainly it needs no higher ſanction, than the example of the apoſtles, being approved of the Lord, by the gift of his Holy Spirit, and placed among the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, Heb. vi. 2.

LAYING on of hands was practiſed by the apoſtles, with two diſtinct views, tho' much to the ſame purpoſe; waiting for the communications of the Holy Spirit. The one was a confeſſion of faith, in the univerſal promiſe of the ſpirit, to all that believe on the Son of God; the other was a confeſſion of faith, in the particular promiſe of the ſpirit, to give gifts to the miniſters of the goſpel, for the edification of the church, and enlightening the world. The former is mentioned in theſe ſcriptures following: Act. viii. 17.—ix. 17.—xix. 6. 2 Tim. i. 6. Heb. vi. 2. The latter is mentioned the ſame number of times in theſe texts that follow: Act. vi. 6.—xiii. 3.—xiv. 23. 1 Tim. iv. 14.—v. 22. But it is the former of theſe that is at preſent under conſideration; tho' the latter, in it's place, is an ordinance of equal importance. And there is juſt the ſame authority for the one, as for the other. But ſome people chuſe to confound them, and apply all Laying on of Hands, to miniſterial ordination. But this muſt proceed, either from great inatten-

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tion to the word of truth, or from a deſire to depricate the promiſe of the Father. And thoſe perſons cannot attend to the genuine ſacred deſign, or true ſolemnity of ordination; but as it were a ceremony, or a piece of ſuperſtition. Not in a way of humble waiting on the Lord, for the ſpecial gifts of his ſpirit, to bleſs with miniſterial qualifications; which indeed, none truly can do, who think miniſters are to be qualified in ſchools. But the Laying on of Hands, which was uſed upon believers in general, that they might receive the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, is repreſented in a light very diſtinct from that which was uſed in calling perſons to the miniſtry; as in Samaria, all that believed were baptiſed, both men and women, Act. viii. 12. And theſe are the perſons afterwards ſpoken of, without diſtinction, on whom the apoſtles laid hands, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.

LAYING on of hands, we find to have been a practice in former ages; uſed always with prayer, recommending the perſons, or things preſented, to God for his bleſſing. And it appears, ſometimes to be done of free choice, to expreſs faith in the Lord; as Jacob laid his hands on the ſons of Joſeph. And ſometimes by the ſpecial command of God, as the people of Iſrael laid their hands upon the Levites; the prieſts upon the ſacrifices; and Moſes upon Joſhua. And our Lord himſelf, frequently laid his hands on the perſons whom he healed. But whether it was done by divine appointment, or of free choice, it was always intended as a confeſſion of faith in the promiſes of God, preſenting the perſon to the Lord by earneſt prayer and ſupplication, waiting for the bleſſings according

cording to the occaſion, and the promiſes of God, in ſuch caſe made to his people. But all the inſtances of bleſſings given by laying on of hands, in former ages, were only ſhadows of the bleſſings of goſpel grace, which the Lord has promiſed to all that believe in Jeſus; and laying on of hands, in faith of the Lord's promiſe has the divine ſanction, and apoſtolical preſident, as it is done in expectation of the higheſt of all bleſſings.

THE Father laid hands on the ſon, Pſal. lxxx. 17. Not corporeal hands, but the hands of divine majeſty and power, Mat. iii. 16, 17. Mark i. 10, 11, Luke iii. 21, 22. John vi. 27. Theſe hands are the oil of gladneſs, Pſalm xlv. 7. And the ſpirit of power, Acts x. 38. In which he enjoyed his God in perfection, and did good to men in the richeſt meaſure, John iii. 34. Jeſus laid hands on his apoſtles, Luke xxiv. 50. That is, his hands of wiſdom, power, grace and truth, Joh. xx. 22. Act. ii. 2, 3, 4. And the hands which he laid upon his diſciples were to the ſame purpoſe as the Father laid hands upon him, to enrich them with all heavenly bleſſings, Joh. xiv. 16, 17.—xvi. 25.—Eph. i. 17, 18.—iii. 16, 19. And to give them power to ſhew forth the glory of God, and to be uſeful in his church, 1 Cor. ii. 4.—xii. 7, 11.—xiv. 15.—Eph. iv. 12.—1 Pet. iv. 14. The apoſtles (whoſe ſucceſſors all faithful miniſters are) laid hands upon ſuch as believed and were baptized, Act. viii. 17. It is true it is not mentioned in every place, nor are we told that they did it to all that were baptized. No more are we told that they delivered the Lord's ſupper to all that were baptized, nor that they baptized all that are ſaid to believe, though there is no reaſon to doubt it; and laying on of hands is ſufficiently

ciently noted, to ſhew it was the practice of the apoſtles. As Peter and John upon the Samaritans, Ananias upon Saul, Paul upon the brethren at Epheſus, and likewiſe upon Timothy, as well as declaring it to be a principle of the doctrine of Chriſt. And the manner in which it is mentioned, leaves no room to doubt that it was a conſtant practice, and done to all. For the promiſe is to all; and all that are baptized in the name of Jeſus, are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghoſt, and do thereby profeſs to believe and wait for the promiſe of the Father.

THE matter is prayer and ſupplication for the fulfilling of the promiſe; ſo the diſciples waited, Act. i. 4, 14.—ii. 1. Laying on of the hands is a peculiar mode adapted to the occaſion, pointing out that identical perſon for whom the ſupplication is made, to ſignify that we do not only acknowledge ſuch a promiſe in general, but fixedly wait for the fulfilling thereof upon every one in particular who believes on the Son of God. It is a ratification of the confeſſion of our faith which we made in baptiſm, and alſo that we are firmly aſſured that the holy One is now actually aſcended into the glory of the Father, ſet down on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens, and has now received the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt to ſhed forth upon all that wait for him; and that he will abundantly pour his ſpirit, in the fulneſs of all rich bleſſings, upon every member of his body. And in this faith and firm hope the perſon preſents himſelf before the Lord, to lay his humble claim to the promiſe, and to wait for the vital communication into his intellectual powers. And the miniſter or miniſters preſent him to the Lord in laying their hands on him with prayer and ſupplication, in full aſ-

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ſurance that as the Father has fulfilled his word to his beloved Son, he will alſo fulfil it by his Son to all that believe in the Chriſt of God.

THE miniſter lifts up his hands to heaven, to expreſs his faith in the Father which is in heaven; and in the Son, who came down from heaven to reveal the Father, and who is aſcended far above all heavens, and now comes down in the fulneſs of the ſpirit, to fill the hearts of all his elect with all the bleſſings of the fulneſs of God. And he lays his hands upon the perſon, in token that that perſon is now devoted to the Lord, to wait for the fulfilling of the promiſe of the Father through the Son of his love, even the ſpirit of the Father and of the Son to dwell in him for ever. The hands are laid upon the head, to ſignify that the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Father was poured upon Chriſt, the living Head of his body, the church, Eph. v. 23. And as the head is the ſeat of underſtanding, ſo we expect to be bleſſed with all ſpiritual light and knowledge in the heavenlies in Chriſt, Eph. i. 17, 18. And through the underſtanding that the affections, the will, and all the intellectual powers ſhall be ſanctified to the Lord, and enriched with all ſpiritual bleſſings, Col. ii. 2. That the perſon may be made ſtrong in faith and love, humility, patience, holineſs, zeal for God, and joy in the Lord. That he may be a worthy member in the church of God, and may ſhine as a light in the world, till he ſhall be formed into the very image of the Son of God, 2 Cor. iii. 18, and ſhall be ripe for that glory which is in immortality, Rom. ii. 7.

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THUS, in the ordinance of laying on of hands, we confeſs the Son of the Father in all his fulneſs, his union with his church, his high exaltation at the Father's right hand, and the abundant anointing which it pleaſed the Father ſhould dwell in his Son, and which now flows from himſelf to all his choſen, with the faithfulneſs of his promiſe, our ſtrong confidence in him, and earneſt deſire to him, that we may be filled with the ſame holy ſpirit which it pleaſed the Father to pour upon his beloved Son, Pſal. xlv. 7. Joh. iii. 34. Joh. xv. 26.

ATTENTION to the WORD of TRUTH.

CHRIST is made known to us by his word, and no other way; conſequently no man can know him, or confeſs him; who does not, with all his heart and ſoul, attend to the word of the goſpel of the Son of God. But whoſoever does in meekneſs and ſincerity, apply his whole mind to the word of God, in order to obtain the knowledge of the truth, without looking for it any other way; the ſame confeſſes the Lord Jeſus, as the true prophet of God: by whoſe ſpirit all ſcripture was given. That ſoul is certain to find the knowledge of God, Prov. ii. 1—5. And he that does, with all his intellectual powers, confeſs Chriſt, as the great prophet; the ſame will confeſs him, in all his other offices, and characters. For he that believes the word in deed and in truth, will believe whatſoever that word relates; ſo far as he can underſtand it; and if he is ſincere in his attention to the word of life, he is certain to come to the genuine underſtanding of it, Prov. viii. 17. Jer. xxix. 13.

Joh. viii. 31, 32. That ſoul cannot be left to walk in darkneſs, but the true ſimilitude of the Lord ſhall he behold, and will confeſs him with all his heart.

THE word of God is Chriſt himſelf in the openings of all the counſels of God, the love of the Father, the fulneſs of the Son, and the power of the Holy Ghoſt. Therefore if we duly attend to the ſcripture record, we ſhall ſee the Lord of glory in all his offices, characters, excellencies, and perfections which ſhine in this word of life. In this word the ſaints behold the glory of the Lord, whereby they are changed into the ſame image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. By this word they enjoy the bleſſings of ſtrong conſolation, Joh. xv. 11.—xvii. 13. 1 Joh. i. iv. By this word they learn the commandments of the Lord, and know his will, that they may walk to his glory, Joh. xiv. 15.—xv. 8, 10, 14. By this word they enjoy the hope of eternal life, Rom. xv. 4. By this word they are eſtabliſhed in the truth as it is in Jeſus, ſo as to be kept from the paths of the deſtroyer. Pſal. xvii. 4, and not to be carried away with the traditions of men, Eph. iv. 14. For the religious world is full of ſtrange notions and pernicious doctrines, which men receive by tradition one from another, without examining whether they be true or falſe. But having heard them ſo often repeated, and ſo confidently affirmed, they take it for granted that they are ſcripture truths, though they have not the leaſt foundation or connection with the word of God; yet they ſpread like a flood, and men aſſert them for truth without any ſcruple. I ſhall take notice of two (out of the many) of thoſe unſcriptural traditions, which are become almoſt univerſal.

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First, the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, which has no foundation in the word of God, nor ever was maintained by any that paid due regard to the word of God. It was invented by heathens who knew not God, nor had any divine record to inſtruct them, but followed the dictates of their own blind reaſon. They had ſome crude ideas of a future ſtate, which they judged muſt ſuppoſe immortality; but being total ſtrangers to the immortality which is in Chriſt, they could not conceive whence it ſhould come, but they conjectured therefore that man muſt have immortality in himſelf. And profeſſed Chriſtians, diſregarding the light of the word of truth, which is clear and plain, have followed theſe blind heathens in their dark dreams.

In the word of truth, there is not a ſentence that naturally conveys the leaſt idea of the ſoul of man being immortal by nature, yet a very clear declaration how man comes to be immortal. In the work of creation, there is not any account or appearance either of mortality or immortality, but ſimply how man was made, and that he became a living ſoul. But afterward we are diſtinctly informed how mortality was introduced by ſin, and through the whole ſcripture we have an ample teſtimony how immortality came by Jeſus Chriſt.

The queſtion is not, Whether man ſhall poſſeſs immortality in the Lord of glory? *Who only hath immortality?* And who is the *reſurrection and the life?* For all mankind certainly ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the immortality of Chriſt, (that they never more may deſtroy their being, as it was once deſtroyed by the firſt ſin) *who hath abo-*

liſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel. Neither is the queſtion, Whether the ſoul enters this immortality at an earlier period than the body does? For that is plain that the body ſhall not enter into immortality till the ſecond coming of Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. But the ſoul, when it dies out of that life it now enjoys in the body, ſhall enter into immortality in a moment; the ſame as thoſe bodies ſhall, who remain alive to the ſecond coming of the Lord: And hence our Lord proves the reality of the reſurrection, in that Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob certainly were alive though their bodies were dead, Mat. xxii. 31, 32. Mar. xii. 26, 27. Luk. xx. 37, 38. But had they had immortal ſouls, this argument had been no proof of the reſurrection. And the apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking of the time when the body ſhall be diſſolved, and the ſoul ſhall be abſent from it, 2 Cor. v. 1—8, he ſays, *We have a building of God*, &c. This can be no other than Chriſt the Lord, in whoſe immortality the ſoul ſhall be embraced. *Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.* Here he plainly ſpeaks of the mortality of the ſoul, for the mortality of the body will not be ſwallowed up till the laſt day.

By ſin, the whole man became mortal, and the ſoul is certain to die, as well as the body; otherwiſe, the judgement againſt the firſt ſin could not take place, Gen. ii. 17—iii. 19. For the ſentence was pronounced againſt the whole man, and proves that the whole nature was capable of dying, and plainly declares the diſſolution of the creatures exiſtence. Had theſe ſentences only intended one part of the man, or had there been any re-

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ſerve or latent meaning, the words had been ambiguous, and the ſentences indeterminate, unworthy the righteous Judge of all. If men did but make uſe of their own reaſon, they could not but know that their ſouls are mortal. Let a man duly obſerve his own intellectual powers, he will find ſuch defects in his mental faculties, as will convince him that his ſoul is not poſſeſſed of immortality. Or let him obſerve aged people, he will plainly diſcover the traces of mortality in their ſouls as well as their bodies. Sometimes the decay is firſt diſcovered in the corporeal parts, and ſometimes in the mental powers, but in a common way they appear to decline both together; ſo that it is impoſſible, either from ſcripture or reaſon, to find any ſolid ground to imagine that one part of man is either more or leſs mortal than the other, but that ſoul and body conſtitute one creature, and are ſo perfectly dependent on each other, that (according to nature) it would be impoſſible for one to live a moment without the other.

THIS romantic fiction of ſouls being immortal, makes man appear a moſt monſtrous creature, made up of a mortal and immortal part, between which no true coheſion could ever be, but a ſtrange diſunion in the ſame being, from whence no conception of happineſs can be formed; and yet more abſurd in the reſurrection, a compound of immortality of different natures, the body living by the uncreated immortality of Chriſt, through the power of his reſurrection, and the ſoul living by a created immortality exiſting in its own nature. Theſe would be of ſuch a different production, that they never could coincide, nor could the man ever be happy to eternity. It is true, that for a certain ſpace the ſoul will exiſt abſent from the body,

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but it is by the ſame reſurrection power of Chriſt, who was made a *quickening ſpirit*; and it is abſolutely neceſſary that the ſoul ſhould not remain in a ſtate of death, foraſmuch as we muſt all appear again. For the ſoul is the reſidence of ſin, and if it was to be diſſolved, the ſin would ceaſe to be, and there could be no eternal judgement. Alſo in the ſouls of the ſaints dwells eternal life; and if their ſouls were to ſubſide, that eternal life would depart.

BUT men fancy they can prove the immortality of the ſoul from what is ſaid of the formation of man; *And man became a living ſoul.* Hereby ſhewing their inſenſibility or inattention, as if there was no difference between *living* and *immortal.* A living ſoul is a living man or a living creature, and by the ſame operation man became a living body. Let them look at Gen. i. 30, and read the margin, *A living ſoul* is applied to every beaſt, and every fowl or animal creature. But it is common to produce a number of thoſe texts, which plainly declare, or make manifeſt, that the ſouls of men are in a ſtate of intelligence or vital exiſtence during the body's repoſe in the grave. Theſe, they ſay, are infallible proof of the immortality of ſouls; but their producing them for that purpoſe, is a proof of their raſhneſs and inattention. For thoſe ſcriptures ſay nothing of man's original, or of his natural conſtitution, but of things as they now are, in conſequence of the reſurrection of the Lord, the virtue whereof they plainly ſhew.

A ſincere attention to the word of truth, would cauſe all theſe romantic fictions to evaporate.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, the doctrine of original ſin, or what ſome men with a little more deluſive art call original corruption, ſuggeſting that mankind have contracted ſuch infection from Adam, and come into the world ſo polluted, that they unavoidably ſin, and make themſelves eternally miſerable. This is a doctrine which God abhors, and has forbidden all that fear him ever to mention, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30. Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, 4. There is not the leaſt foundation for ſuch a notion to be found in all the book of God, only what the ſons of Antichriſt have invented, and by ſophiſtical gloſſes have forced an unnatural meaning upon ſome expreſſions in the ſacred word, in order to favour their own corrupt imaginations, and impoſe upon the unwary. And all thoſe portions of ſcripture which repreſent the wickedneſs of men in defiling themſelves and deſtroying themſelves, they pervert, by turning the fault from the individuals and laying it upon Adam. But their real deſign is to lay their ſin upon God; for Adam could not have cauſed his ſin to pollute his poſterity, if God had not fixed ſuch a conſtitution as ſhould carry the contagion, and bring all mankind involuntarily into a ſtate of wickedneſs, wretchedneſs, and miſery.

IN the word of God the ſin of Adam, and all the effects thereof, appear perfectly plain to all that ſincerely attend to that word; for no man can attend to the word of the living God in ſincerity but he is certain to underſtand it, Hoſ. vi. 3. Joh. viii. 31, 32. Adam was made ſovereign lord of the univerſal creation. All things were made for him, and had their dependence on him, Pſal. viii. 6, 7, 8. Adam fell, and the whole creation fell in him; and every being in the viſible creation was brought into a

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ſtate of perdition, and in the end both heaven and earth ſhall periſh, and be no more what they now are, through that very ſin. And all his deſcendents, ſtanding in a perfect fœderal union with him, were as deep involved as himſelf in his ſin and all its effects, or the ſuffering that enſued thereupon, which was the total privation of all bleſſedneſs, or the abſolute loſs of all our enjoyments, with the perfect diſſolution or extirpation of our being, for neither leſs nor more than that is expreſſed in the threatening and in the ſentence. And it is equally plain that Chriſt the ſecond Adam has perfectly taken away that ſin, with all its effects; ſo that at his ſecond coming, and the reſurrection of the dead, there ſhall be a perfect reſtitution of all things. The ſerpent's head ſhall be totally bruiſed, and from thenceforth no remains of that ſin ſhall ever more be ſeen in the creation of God.

No mention is ever made of the firſt tranſgreſſion having any relation to the damnation of hell, nor of it's conveying a ſinful nature to any of the poſterity of Adam. For ſince that covenant was diſſolved, every ſoul ſtands properly by himſelf; and our perſonal ſins have no connexion with the ſin of Adam. There is no reſemblance between the things threatened againſt the the one and the other. The former was not properly puniſhment, but loſs; which being reſtored, thro' the atonement made by Chriſt, we feel no more than a taſte thereof. But the latter brings puniſhment of the deepeſt nature, even eternal miſery to all that die in their ſins, Mar. ix. 44, 46, 48. And this puniſhment, being the torment of their own conſciences, is of ſuch a nature, as no man can poſſibly feel for another's crime. Adam

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was judged and condemned the very day he ſinned, and the execution began that very day, and the ſentence is in executing upon us all to this hour. But the laſt judgement upon individuals, for the deeds done in the body, will not commence till all the effects of Adam's ſin are ſubſided.

But ſome think they can find plain proof in the ſcripture, that our nature is become ſinful from Adam. They urge the words of Job, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Here they conjecture that Job was ſpeaking of an original corruption, which he had derived from his firſt Father; whereas there is no mention made of any ſuch thing, but of his own deficiency, which could not produce any thing worthy to ſtand before God. They plead the words of Bildad, *How can he be clean that is born of a woman?* As if man derived uncleanneſs from his mother, or from the race from whence he ſprung; whereas he does not appear to be ſpeaking of any ſuch thing, but of the infinite diſtance between the tremendous majeſty of God and the inconſiderable worm man. That even the ſtars are too mean to appear before the glorious Being, as Eliphaz ſaid, *His angels he charged with folly.* Yet they are called holy angels, and they do his commandments. Howbeit, all that are born of women are unjuſt by ſin; but this is never imputed to their original formation, but to the abuſe of the faculties with which God had endued them. They propoſe the words of the Pſalm lviii. 3, *The wicked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, ſpeaking lies.* As if men came wicked out of the womb. But why is this applied only to the wicked, if it be the caſe of all men?

No man in the uſe of his reaſon can think that children can go about acting wickedneſs, or ſpeaking lies, the firſt hour, day, month, or year after they are born. The meaning can be no other, than that they do theſe things ſo ſoon as their underſtandings will admit, unleſs we underſtand David to mean (which is not improbable) that wicked parents taught their children wickedneſs from the very earlieſt period that they were capable of acting or ſpeaking, as many parents do before the child can poſſibly know the evil. And it is my judgement, that many children receive more damage from their immediate parents, than either they or their parents ever received from Adam. Another ſcripture commonly brought to prove this original corruption, is Pſal. li. 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* This they plead as undeniable, that man comes into the world ſinful. But if that had been David's deſign, how came he to know it? It was not poſſible for him to remember his own conception, and there was not any thing written from whence ſuch a ſentiment could be gathered. But the matter is plain. In the margin, our tranſlators tell us, that the word rendered *conceive*, in the original is *warm*, which very properly may be applied to his mother's nurſing care. So that no more appears, than that in lamenting his ſin, he looks back, and remembers the vanity and frowardneſs of his mind from thoſe early years, and mourns and grieves that from his youth he had ſhapen himſelf to evil diſpoſitions and habits, as we all have done. In whatever nature he was conceived was not his fault; but wherein he had corrupted the nature which God had given him, was matter of repentance and godly ſorrow.

WITHOUT controverſy, nature muſt be greatly impaired by the fall; as it is now become mortal, which it was not before. But nature, or weakneſs of nature, was never called ſin, or corruption. It is deviation from nature, that is ſin. Sin is the tranſgreſſion of the law. But the law never required more than a right uſe of thoſe natural powers, which we have, Deut. vi. 5. Levit. xix. 18. But new born infants cannot poſſibly be charged with ſin; for while they have no underſtanding, they cannot be under any law, Joh. ix. 41. Rom. iv. 15. And what that ſin is, which they bring with them into the world, is ſuch a chimera, as all the wit of man will never be able to deſcribe. Nor was a more fooliſh tale ever told, to them that underſtand what ſin is; than that ſin ſhould exiſt in beings, ſo long as they have no veſſels to contain it. It is abſolutely out of the nature of things, for ſin to be, only as it exiſts in the underſtanding and will. They will need all the cunning of Beelzebub, to help them to ſhew how ſin ſhould have a being in the foetus in the womb; or how it ſhould be communicated in the conception, at the birth, or any way, before the underſtanding be opened, to know good and evil. And I do not ſee any advantage, that any one can propoſe by this doctrine; either any light it is ſuppoſed to give, or any comfort it can yield; only to excuſe their ſin, and lay it upon God; for if ſuch a conſtitution there be in the human nature, God muſt have fixed it; and therefore, muſt be the author, or firſt cauſe of our ſin. Or elſe, that this doctrine may ſerve as a bugbear, to frighten ſuperſtitious parents, to bring their children to the church; leſt they ſhould be ſent to hell for Adam's ſin, and themſelves damned for the neglect.

But the ſtain muſt not be very deep, if an idolatrous ceremony can waſh it away. This doctrine, of confounding Adam's ſin with ours, making his offence the original of that which brings damnation; ſeems to be one of the deepeſt ſchemes of hell: as if all the devils in the bottomleſs pit had held a conſultation, to invent a doctrine, to overthrow all the truth of God, at one ſtroke. For where this doctrine prevails, no divine truth can exiſt.

IT ſtands in oppoſition to the ſacred word. The word tells us, man was made upright; this ſays, he comes depraved into the world. The word lays man's deſtruction on himſelf, Eccleſ. vii. 29. Jer. ii. 17, 21. Hoſ. xiii. 9. This tells us, he was deſtroyed in Adam. We know he was deſtroyed in Adam, but not with the deſtruction which they ſuggeſt. The evaſion that Adam was made upright, and deſtroyed himſelf, and us in him, is a quibble of the father of lies. The Scripture ſtill charges men with corrupting themſelves; this tells us it was Adam that corrupted them; the word tells us, the woman's ſeed ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head; this tells us, the ſeed of the ſerpent then ſown in Adam, will go down with men to hell, and ſo his head never will be bruiſed, but live to eternity. The word ſays, there ſhall be a reſtitution of all things; this ſays, the effect of that firſt ſin will be eternal damnation, and conſequently there never will be a compleat reſtitution. The ſcripture tells us of a ſecond death, but if Adam's ſin has any influence thereinto, it will not be a ſecond death, only a continuance of the firſt death.

IT is a full denial of all the perfections of God, if he could bring forth creatures to be ſinful of neceſſity; he could not be a holy being, if he could condemn, and eternaly puniſh creatures for what never was in their power to avoid; he could not be a righteous being; if he could prevaricate in the threatning and ſentence which he paſſed upon Adam, intending a more terrible puniſhment than he expreſſed, or than the man could poſſibly underſtand, he muſt act a moſt perfidious part. If God gives man a law, which never was in his power to keep, and caſts him into endleſs miſery for the breach of that law, he muſt be the moſt execrable tyrant. The Lord admoniſhes men perſuades and reaſons with them to avoid ſin, expreſſes his moſt ardent deſire, Deut. v. 29.—xxxii. 29. and laments over them, Pſal. lxxxi. 13. Luk. xiii. 34. But if himſelf had brought them into the world, in ſuch depravity as made it impoſſible, he muſt be the moſt inſincere of all beings. He denies that he ever required to reap where he had not ſown, Iſai. v. 4, and declares his ways are equal. But this doctrine makes it all a deluſive impoſition, ſo that according to this doctrine there is no true God.

THIS doctrine utterly denies the Mediator; for the ſentence againſt the firſt tranſgreſſion took hold on the Lord Jeſus as deep as on any of the ſons of Adam. He was made of the ſeed of David; made of a woman; and conſtantly calls himſelf *the Son of man.* And in whatever nature others come into the world, he came in the ſame; which, if it was ſinful, he could not ſtand before God; or if he came in a different nature, he could not be all one with his brethren, and therefore could not ſtand our repreſentative

preſentative. So then if this be true, we have no high prieſt over the houſe of God.

IT ſtrongly contradicts the Holy Ghoſt; who tells us, the anointed was choſen out of the people, and that he was raiſed up from among their bretheren; all of one. In all things made like his brethren; and yet he tells us, he was without ſin, undefiled, ſeparated from ſinners, and in him is no ſin, without blemiſh and without ſpot. But if we come polluted into the world, both theſe teſtimonies cannot be true; for either he muſt be defiled with us, or he could not be in all things like us; therefore, either this doctrine is falſe, or there is no ſpirit of truth.

THUS I have briefly touched on theſe two common running notions, to ſhew the neceſſity of a cloſe adherance to the oracles of God. But there is the ſame reaſon to be upon our guard reſpecting every opinion that is commonly received among religious people; for in general they are nothing elſe but the traditions of men, and the froth of ſchools, perverting the precious truths of the holy one of God. There certainly is much wiſdom, and many uſefull ſciences, taught in the ſchools relating to the things of this world; but the things of the kingdom of God are utterly out of their latitude, being of a higher nature, of which they nothing know. Therefore, if we would know the truth of God, we muſt attend to the ſimple teſtimony of his word, without any regard to the doctrines of men; however ſtrongly abetted, or univerſally received. For if a man's mind be fixed in the common ſentiments of the religious world, and takes a deliberate view in what light the God of Glory is repreſented thro' thoſe mediums, or according

according to thoſe vulgar opinions. I ſee not how any man can believe in ſuch a god, or love ſuch a being. Neither can I conceive it poſſible for any man, ſincerly to repent of his ſins ſo long as he is perſuaded, they were unavoidably brought upon him by ſome other hand than his own. But every one that confeſſes the Son of God in truth, confeſſes him in this, that he utterly explodes and deteſts, every doctrine of human invention; and to learn the will of God, applies himſelf intirely to the teſtimony of Jeſus. Iſai. viii. 20.

And this attention to the word of Chriſt, implies a diligent ſearching of the ſcriptures, wherein all the will of God is contained; that we may be grounded in the truth of the ſacred record; and that we may behold the excellency that ſhines in the holy one; whereby our ſouls may be enlightened, enlarged, and enriched, into the boundleſs bleſſings of the Lord, Emmanuel. And in this ſearch the ſoul is quite alert, as if ſearching for ſilver and ſeeking for hid treaſure. For, knowing that all the ſcriptures teſtify of Chriſt, he compares the words of one prophet, with another; the words of one apoſtle, with another; and the true import of the Old Teſtament, with the clear manifeſtation in the New: yea, he diligently ponders the hiſtorical parts with the propheſies and epiſtles, till he ſees the harmony, and conſiſtency of the whole; and till he ſees Jeſus to be the light and truth, the life and power, the alpha and omega, of all the divine oracles. Thus he comes to underſtand the true fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. He beholds the goſpel of the Son of God, as a perfect mirrour of the divine will; and there he beholds the ſhining forth of all the glory of the Lord.

Thus,

Thus, obeying the direction given by the ſon of God, Joh. v. 39. he confeſſes Chriſt the great prophet, to be his all in all.

THERE is alſo an attention to the word of God, under the public miniſtry of the goſpel. For that is the ordinance of Chriſt; who has promiſed to give paſtors according to his heart, to feed with knowledge and underſtanding. But ſome men may ſay, Are there not many antichriſts now in the world? How then ſhall I know who thoſe miniſters are, whom Chriſt hath ſent? I anſwer, there have come many thieves and robbers, but the ſheep did not hear them. Tho' I doubt not, but there are more than a thouſand preachers of this world, for one that is ſent by Chriſt Jeſus; yet the Lord gives that light to his own elect, that they can diſtinguiſh between the language of Beelzebub, and the language of Emanuel. John x. 4. 5. Notwithſtanding, ſome young chriſtians may be ſome time before they get the victory over the image of the beaſt, eſpecially if their reſidence be in ſuch a part where the pure goſpel of Jeſus is not preached, or not within a convenient diſtance, which is the caſe in ſome places. This may be trying to the lambs of Jeſus, to be ſeparate from the flock; not having opportunity to hear the word of God in truth, nor enjoying the company of the diſciples of Chriſt; this may cauſe them to grow flat, and languid in their ſpirits; and this is the time of danger, being at the ſame time, ſurrounded with carnal profeſſors, and preachers of a perverted goſpel, who conſtantly preſent their gilded baits, and deluſive counterfeits, to enſnare and beguile unſtable ſouls. Here it may be with ſome difficulty, that the babes in Chriſt obtain deliverance.

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But the apoſtle has taught us the way of eſcape. *This I ſay then, walk in the ſpirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh.* If they be the real called ones, the love of God, will prevail, and they will ſearch after the truth with all their ſoul, and the Lord has promiſed, that they that ſeek ſhall find, for they that follow Chriſt ſhall not abide in darkneſs. And tho' for a time, the carnal troops may overcome them; through the power of the ſpirit, they ſhall overcome at the [illegible], ſo far as they are brought to the light, they will eſchew the darkneſs, and come out from among thoſe that walk therein; for ſo hath the Lord commanded, 2. Cor. vi. 14.—18. For they cannot feed upon chaff, nor drink the doctrines of men. Therefore, whether they have opportunity to aſſociate with the true ſheep, or not, they will retire from the wolves; and ſo far as is practicable, they will attend to hear the goſpel, where it is preached in demonſtration of the ſpirit, Mar. iv. 24.

THERE is alſo another mode of attending to the word of truth, that is, chriſtian conference, and converſation. This was the practice of the ſaints of old, Mal. iii. 16. And chriſtians are admoniſhed to comfort themſelves together, and edify one another, 1. Theſſ. v. 11. And if they verily be the children of light, this they will do as they have opportunity; for the Lord has given diverſities of gifts to his ſaints, and they are intended to be uſeful in inſtructing one another. Therefore we are commanded not to forſake the aſſembling of ourſelves together, but to exhort one another. Heb. x. 25. For notwithſtanding, that none of them pretends to any light, but what they receive from the word of truth; that word is ſo extenſive, deep, and boundleſs; ſo rich, ſo holy, and

ſo excellent, that no one created mind is able to fathom, to conceive of, or to contain the whole. But having different capacities, to view things in their different directions; one takes in one branch of the light of goſpel grace, and another conceives of another, which by communing together, and imparting their ideas one to another; tends to mutual edification. Therefore the Lord has made it our duty to love one another, to live in peace, and to preſerve the unity of the ſpirit, that we may comfort and edify one another. Rom. xiv. 19. Col. iii. 15, 16.

And each believer has one mode of attending to the word of truth, peculiar to himſelf, that is, ſerious meditation, deliberate contemplation. This was an exerciſe, in which David was conſtantly found. He meditated on the works of God. Pſal. lxxvii. 12. He meditated in the word of God, Pſal. cxix. 148. He meditated all the day, Pſal. cxix. 97. He meditated in the night watches. Pſal. lxiii. 6. And it is the character of every child of light, that he delights in the law of the Lord, and meditates therein day and night, Pſal. i. 2. In all theſe different modes, the believer attends to the word of life, with all his ſoul, and makes confeſſion of him, of whom that word teſtifies. For the word is Chriſt himſelf, in his grace and truth, and upon every word that proceeds from God, the ſaints live.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.

THIS is a duty of the higheſt nature, and an exerciſe of the higheſt delight; for glory in the higheſt perfection is due to the holy name of the Lord, Pſal. lxvi. 8. And all nations are called to bleſs and adore him, Pſal. c. 1, 2.—cxvii. 1. Rom. xv. 10, 11. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. That is, ſo many as it ſhall pleaſe our God to call to the faith of his ſon Jeſus, for they that love the Lord, can never ceaſe from this work, Pſal. lxxxiv. 4.—cxlv. 1. 2.—cxlvi. 1. 2. Rev. iv. 8. Every one that honours the father, honours the ſon, for their glory cannot be divided; no glory can poſſibly be given to the one, that is not given to the other, for they are one. And to render thankſgiving and praiſe, is the moſt direct and immediate way of confeſſing the God of all grace. In this we confeſs the ſenſible feelings of our hearts, and breath out the very joy, admiration, and gratitude of our ſouls; declaring our intellectual conceptions of the Lord of glory, and the deep impreſſions thereby made upon our innate powers, and exert all the faculties of our minds, to ſhew forth the excellency, the bleſſedneſs, the greatneſs, and the goodneſs of the holy one. And this branch of confeſſion conſiſts of divers parts.

I. In aſcribing the glory due to his excellent greatneſs, or his eſſential perfection: herein we confeſs the abſolute majeſty and glory of the Father, his eternal, infinite, immutable bleſſedneſs; his righteouſneſs and holineſs, his wiſ-

dom, power, truth and love. And we confeſs the going forth of all theſe perfections in the man Chriſt Jeſus, or the opening of the divine boſom in the Son of his delight. So that all the ineffable, inconceiveable glories, of the Lord omnipotent; which from the beginning of the world have been hid in God, now ſhine in the greateſt luſter in the face of Jeſus Chriſt: for Emmanuel is the brightneſs of the Father's glory, the expreſs image of his perſon; and in him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily; or all that is in the incomprehenſible Jehovah, is in the man of his right hand. *I and my Father are one.* Thus, all the ſaints adore and bleſs, magnify and extol the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father; while they confeſs the Holy Ghoſt to be the very life, light, ſpirit, truth, and power of the Father and the Son, proceeding into the hearts of all that believe; to come by the knowledge of the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent; to introduce them into the fellowſhip of the Father and the Son; and fill them with all the fulneſs of God.

II. In aſcribing the glory due to his name, in the open manifeſtation of himſelf, in his great goodneſs and mercy, to a world of loſt ſinners; wherein he has revealed the eternal counſels of his will in his everlaſting love, and immutable purpoſe of grace, according to his fore-appointment, as he had determined and ordained in his own invariable mind, before the world was. This is now revealed in his beloved Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds. This love he fully manifeſted in taking our nature, being made of a woman; in openly declaring the father, in preaching the righteouſneſs of God, and ſhewing forth his ſalvation; in taking

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our ſins upon himſelf, and bearing our puniſhment, our ſorrows and miſeries, in his own body on the tree; in riſing again for our juſtification; in aſcending to his Father, to preſent us in the virtue of his own blood, before the throne. In that he now appears in the preſence of God, to give us acceſs to the throne of grace, and ever liveth to make interceſſion for us; and in that he now ſends us his bleſſed goſpel, in the power of his holy ſpirit, to open to us theſe deep and glorious things of God, and to communicate the bleſſings thereof to our ſouls, that we may be delivered from all iniquity, and may inherit eternal life. For theſe things, all the children of light do joyfully bleſs, admire, adore, praiſe, extol, magnify, and exult in the name of the Lord; and aſcribe to the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; all glory, honour, and worſhip, with all the powers of their ſouls. For ſo it is written, *In the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow and every tongue ſhall confeſs.*

III. In aſcribing to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt, all glory and praiſe, for the abundant communications, and flowings of grace, with which their own ſouls are bleſſed. They bleſs his name, that he opened their hearts, to attend to his word, when ſhut up in hardneſs and impenitence; that by the light of his word, he opened their eyes, when darkneſs had blinded their minds; that when dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, he was pleaſed to quicken them to live by the faith of the Son of God; that when they were enemies in their minds, they were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; that when they were far off, he made them nigh, by revealing the blood of Chriſt in their conſciences; that when they were children

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of wrath, he had granted them peace in the Son of his love; that when they were ſlaves of ſatan in bondage under ſin, he had proclaimed liberty and made them free from ſin and death. They bleſs his name that they have received remiſſion of ſins; that they now ſtand juſtified before God, through the righteouſneſs of the great Redeemer; that they now enjoy peace with God through the great mediator, the prince of peace. They bleſs his name who hath begotten them again to a lively hope, in full aſſurance of perfect deliverance from all ſin, with all the remains, and all the effects thereof; that they ſhall obtain a glorious reſurrection to be like the Holy One, and to be with him; that they ſhall ſtand at his right hand unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight in the day of judgement; and that they ſhall reign with him for ever in his kingdom, which the Father hath prepared for them, from the foundation of the world. They bleſs his name for thoſe heavenly diſpoſitions wrought by his grace in their ſouls; as love to God, love to the brethren, hatred to ſin, thirſt after internal and external holineſs, ſubmiſſion to the will of the Father, zeal for his glory, delight in walking in his ways, dependance on his truth, &c. And they render thankſgiving, bleſſing, and praiſe, to the Holy One, for the abundant enriching of their intellectual powers, ſo far as they have received the anointings of the Holy Ghoſt. The clear light they now enjoy to look into the deep, the high, the glorious things of the kingdom of God, being guided thereinto by the ſpirit of truth; The ſuperlative and immoveable joy their ſouls partake of thro' the divine comforter, whom the Son has ſent from the Father; the free acceſs they have to the throne of God, and the bold-

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neſs given them by the ſpirit of adoption; whereby as children, they draw nigh, and cry, ABBA FATHER.

For theſe and all ſuch like bleſſings, the children of light can never forget to be thankful, nor can they forget the common bleſſings of nature, which they daily receive; tho' theſe are not their portion, yet they receive them with gratitude, as neceſſary helps by the way, which their heavenly Father knows they have need of. Therefore the children of the kingdom bleſs the Lord for every thing, and never ceaſe to confeſs his holy name, with thankſgiving, worſhip, glory, and praiſe.

PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION.

TO this ordinance we are commanded by the Lord, we are excited by our neceſſities, we are drawn by the moſt encouraging invitations given, we are ſtrengthened by the promiſes made to them that aſk, we are inſtructed by the ſpecial directions given in the word of grace, and we are guided by the ſpirit of truth. But this is only to be underſtood of the children of God; it is not the duty of ſinners to pray, ſo long as they are going on in a courſe of wickedneſs: Iſai. i. 10.—15. Thoſe prayers are only mockery, taking the name of the Lord God in vain. *The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* But there is another ſort of perſons who are ſinners, but are convinced of their ſinful ſtate, and are deſiring deliverance, crying, *God be merciful to me a ſinner.* Theſe cannot come to God with that boldneſs, or find ſuch near acceſs,

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as thoſe that are born of God, for they know themſelves to be ſinners, and as ſuch they pray to God for the forgiveneſs of their ſins; yet to them, their is all encouragement given. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* There is abundant encouragement in the word of God for ſinners to pray, but they are always ſuppoſed to be ſuch ſinners whoſe eyes are open, whoſe conſciences are wounded, and who are ſincerely ſeeking ſalvation from their ſins. Theſe are taught to pray upon a preſumptive right in conſideration of what God is, and that he has declared himſelf to be merciful and gracious; to which declarations they have a right to plead or lay claim. Foraſmuch as they are made to perſons in the very ſame predicament in general, as they know themſelves to be, even ungodly; and there is no diſcouragement to any ſoul that ſeeks the Lord in ſincerity. Rom. x. 12, 13. But the diſciple of Jeſus, knowing that God is his father, and that he is accepted as a child in his father's houſe, can come with boldneſs, and draw nigh in full aſſurance of faith; for through Chriſt by the ſpirit of adoption, he finds free acceſs to the Father. Now, ſo far as theſe humbled ſinners pray to God through Chriſt, they confeſs him according to what meaſure of faith they have attained; but they cannot confeſs him like the real diſciples, who are eſtabliſhed in the faith, and filled with the ſpirit.

No man ever prays to the Father, but in the name of the Son. *No man cometh unto the Father but by me.* Joh. xiv. 6, 13.—xv. 16.—xvi. 23. 24. I do not ſay they may never preſent a petition to the Father, without immediately mentioning the Son by name, but it is always in that boldneſs

neſs which is given them in the Son; this, to every believer under heaven is familiarly known. And in coming to God by Jeſus Chriſt alone, they confeſs that in themſelves their is nothing that can render them worthy, to come nigh to the Holy Lord God; and until a perſon is perfectly convinced of his own wretchedneſs, and alienation from God. It is impoſſible for him to come to the Father by Jeſus Chriſt; for no man lives by Chriſt but thoſe whom he quickens from the dead: and in coming to the Father in the Son, they confeſs the boundleſs love of the Father in providing ſuch an High Prieſt; they confeſs the fulneſs of grace and truth which dwells in the Son, ſufficient to give them acceptance with the Father; they confeſs the light and truth that ſhines in the goſpel of his grace, whereby their ſouls are directed into the living way; and they confeſs the vital influence of the holy ſpirit, in bringing their dead ſouls in this living way, to the living God; and they confeſs that all the promiſes of God, are in Chriſt, yea and Amen.

Prayer is expreſſed by lifting up the ſoul, lifting up the hands, and lifting up the eyes; as alſo, pouring out the heart, and pouring out the ſoul; which implies the ſtrongeſt confidence in the Lord, and the deepeſt ſubmiſſion to his will, as well as the higheſt adoration of his glory and majeſty. In whatſoever we call upon him for, we confeſs his all-ſufficiency to perform, and his goodneſs to grant our requeſts; for in that we make our ſupplication to the Father, thro' the Son; we acknowledge his omniſcience, to know all our hearts, and all our wants; as alſo, we confeſs his ſympathy and tender compaſſion. Heb. ii. 18. We confeſs his ab-

ſolute power and dominion, over all the univerſal creation, as well as over our whole exiſtence, ſpirit, ſoul, and body; and his infinite fulneſs to beſtow every bleſſing that our ſouls can deſire or enjoy. For every ſoul that prays to the Father which is in Heaven, can truly ſay with the pſalmiſt: *whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee.* For in this addreſs we give him our whole hearts, and our whole ſouls; and therein we declare, that we explode all dependence on any other being; and that our whole expectation is alone, from the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *My ſoul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.*

THE children of God have received great ſpiritual bleſſings; and as they walk in the light, they know what they enjoy, and what they ſtill ſtand in need of; for what they have received, they bleſs, admire, adore, praiſe, and give thanks; and for what they ſtill want, they aſk, they pray, they cry to God moſt high, they plead in the name of Jeſus, and humbly wait for the fulfilling thereof. They have received forgiveneſs of ſins, as relating to divine wrath, and the curſe; in this ſenſe, they never pray for remiſſion, but bleſs God for it. Col. i. 14. But as they are conſcious of many faults in the ſight of the God of holineſs; in this ſenſe, as children, they pray to their Father which is in Heaven, every day, for his forgiving grace; they are delivered from the dominion of ſin: *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you.* But from the incurſions of that enemy, they are not yet free; Rom. vii. 22, 23. Therefore they pray for preſervation from the evil preſent, and for the total deſtruction

deſtruction thereof in the end. Heb. ix. 28. They are called out of the world, and no more belong to it; but while they are in the world, they conſtantly pray to be kept from the evil. Joh. xvii. 15. They are turned from the power of Satan, but they continually pray, to be delivered from his deceptions. 1. Pet. v. 8. They enjoy the light of life, yet they earneſtly pray for greater meaſures of light, and to enjoy life more abundantly. They do really dwell in Chriſt, and he in them, but they perpetually pray, that they may grow up into him in all things, more and more, till they come to perfection. Eph. iv. 13, 15. God is glorified thro' what Chriſt hath done in them, by the word of his grace, and the power of his ſpirit; yet they always pray, that the work may be more and more effectual, and that their Heavenly Father may be glorified more and more.

THE diſciples of Jeſus underſtand the ſpirit, truth, life, and ſubſtance, of that form of prayer which the Lord taught them. They ſee it to contain all that ever can be neceſſary for a believer to pray for; and that it never was intended for any but thoſe who can, in ſpirit and truth, call God their Father; for none elſe can uſe it without profanation; but the real diſciples attend to it as a directory in all their ſupplications. And when they uſe different expreſſions, it is only to aſſiſt their ideas, to enter into the various branches ſpringing from that extenſive root, or the various ſtreams ariſing from that all-comprehending fountain. They never think they can aſk for any thing more, or greater, than what is compriſed in thoſe divine ſentences: for they ſee them to be ſo very comprehenſive, that if they uſe this form verba-

tim, as ſometimes they do in their private retirement; it is with the utmoſt deliberation, making a ſerious pauſe at every ſentance, to give ſcope to their conceptions, that their hearts may go along with their expreſſions, leſt they ſhould lightly run over theſe ſacred words with their lips, without the ſpirit and power, or without due reverence, before their Father which is in Heaven. They acknowledge the propriety, and excellency of every ſentence; and thereby they preſent their petitions in the ſpirit, and in the name of Jeſus, to the Father of lights. In every thing they aſk, confeſſing the glory, riches, and perfection, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt.

FASTING.

THIS is an ordinance appointed in the church, but not as a ſtated practice, to be kept in regular courſe; only in ſuch caſes, and at ſuch times, as neceſſity or occaſion ſhall require. And herein the ſaints confeſs the Lord, as a preſent help in trouble, or in time of need; and that he is always nigh unto them, in all things that they call upon him for. And in this way it has always been attended to, by them that ſought the Lord, in all ages, in any emergencies, diſtreſſes, or upon ſpecial occaſions, they made it a point to faſt and to pray before the Lord, to ſeek his aid, relief, or bleſſing, as the caſe required.

IT is true, there was a ſtated faſt appointed to Iſrael, once a year. Lev. xxiii. 27. Becauſe they were a national

national church; and like all other national churches, the bulk of them were carnal perſons; and not having the ſpirit of God to direct them, it was neceſſary they ſhould be bound to fixed rules, as all national churches are. If they muſt confeſs ſin, implore mercy, or give thanks for bleſſings, they know nothing of it; but as they muſt be directed and pointed like children. But ſuch as knew the Lord in Iſrael, appointed faſts both private and publick, according as the nature of things required; the circumſtances of the caſe, and the ſpirit of God, directing them. And as all chriſtians are bleſſed with the ſpirit of God, to guide them in matters of this nature, they need no times fixed to obſerve this ordinance; for the nature of the caſe points to them when it is neceſſary to faſt, according to the wiſdom and direction given by the Lord. Luk. v. 34, 35.

THE religious world look upon faſting as a piece of auſterity, as a taſk, or kind of puniſhment put upon them; for this is what carnal people can underſtand. And perhaps it did ſo appear to the carnal people in Iſrael; as it is ſaid, they ſhould afflict their ſouls. If they refrain from all meat and drink, they think they faſt; and no doubt that total abſtinence from eating and drinking, is included in faſting, provided the length of the time, and the perſon's conſtitution be ſuch, that he is able to ſuſtain. But it never was intended as a puniſhment, but a preparation for drawing nigh to God; and if the natural frame be over done, and the animal powers weakened; the perſon is not in a fit poſition for waiting on the Lord. And thereby the true end of faſting would be diſappointed. No mortification of the body is requir-

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ed, any other than it may tend to bring the mind to a true ſubmiſſive diſpoſition, to approach to God with reverence, and godly fear. For he hath ſaid, *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice.*

THE true deſign of a faſt, is nothing elſe, but that being quite diveſted of all carnal incumbrances, we may be entirely devoted to the Lord; having our hearts at full liberty, without any embarraſment, to pour our very ſouls into his boſom. Therefore, true faſting is abſtinence from every thing that any way might intercept, incommode, or influence the mind toward any other object; from all indulgence, or ſenſual gratification; from all buſineſs, from all company, from all cares, from all ſtudies, and from every thing of a ſecular nature, that may interrupt our communion with the Lord, or any way divert our minds from the moſt ſincere attention and humble addreſs to the throne of our heavenly Father. And at the ſame time it requires the moſt deliberate examination of ourſelves, whether we indulge any ſinful inclination, or perverſe practice, which God hates, and which may hinder our acceſs to the throne of grace, Pſal. lxvi. 18. With deep repentance, and ſincere turning to the Lord with all our heart, Iſai. lviii. 5, 6, 7. Joel ii. 12, 13, 14.

ONE end of faſting is, when the children of God are under any deep affliction, to obtain relief from him in whom they have believed. Thus David often mentions his prayers and faſtings in his diſtreſs, and Daniel ſet his face unto the Lord God, Dan. ix. 3. And Paul, when buffeted by a meſſenger of Satan, *beſought the Lord thrice.* Which I do not underſtand ſimply of making three prayers,

ers, but that he three times made his ſupplication with faſting, prayer, and interceſſion. And there may be caſes ſo difficult, which require ſuch ſtrength of faith as is no other way to be obtained but by prayer and faſting, Mat. xvii. 20, 21. Mark ix. 29. It is true, there is nothing too hard for faith. If it be but as a grain of muſtard ſeed, nothing ſhall be impoſſible. Not that it can overcome all things, conſidered only in the ſimple grain, but being the true ſeed, will grow to the greateſt herb, ſo as to be victorious over every oppoſing power. And to this ſtature faith arrives in the way of the appointed means, lifting up our ſouls to God, pouring out our hearts to the Lord, in the deepeſt humility confeſſing his name, with faſting, prayer, interceſſion, and deep ſupplication, and patient waiting for the promiſes.

But faſting may be uſed, not merely in caſes of diſtreſs, but to obtain ſome ſpecial favour from the Lord. We find it mentioned as a practice among the ſaints, when there does not appear any affliction, both reſpecting miniſters, 2 Cor. vi. 5, and private chriſtians, 1 Cor. vii. 5, and of churches, Act. xiii. 2. And the Lord has approved it, and has given us directions how to conduct ourſelves therein, Mat. vi. 16, 17, 18. But we find it chiefly uſed in waiting for the ſpecial miniſterial gifts, which God has promiſed to his church. The firſt inſtance of this was in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, before he entered upon his miniſtry, faſted in the wilderneſs forty days, Mat. iv. 2. And immediately after returned in the power of the ſpirit to preach the goſpel, Luke iv. 14, 15. And tho' the diſciples could not follow their Lord, for the length of time which he faſted, they followed him in the

practice. When they had persons to call, to appoint, and to send forth to the ministry; they fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them, Acts vi. 6. xiii. 3. xiv. 23; thus they waited for the promised blessings, which the Lord of glory is exalted to give, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. iv. 10, 11, 12. That those whom the Lord is pleased to appoint to the ministerial work, may receive gifts of knowledge, distinguishing judgement, enlargedness of conception, deep penetration into the mysteries of the Father, and of Christ; with courage, utterance, zeal, and judicious address, to shew forth the glory of the gospel, to saints and sinners. In these things, or upon any other proper occasions, the saints are ready to confess the name of Jesus, in following his example, and his direction, with an intire dependence on his blessing.

KEEPING THE LORD's SABBATH.

THE appointment of the Sabbath Day, was from the beginning, in commemoration of the great work of creation; from which God rested on the seventh day, Gen. ii. 2, 3. Heb. iv. 4. And where God gives commandment for observing the sabbath, he gives this as the reason thereof, because himself had kept it, Exod. xx. 11, xxxi 17, That all the children of men might rest from their works, as God did from his; that they might contemplate the works of the Lord; and be refreshed in beholding his great goodness; for God never appointed any thing to mankind, to be a task or a burden, but rest and comfort;

comfort; therefore God bleſſed the ſeventh day, becauſe he intended it for a bleſſing to his creatures; for herein conſiſts all true happineſs; that we may know God, be devoted to him, and enjoy communion with him. Therefore, in the riches of his loving kindneſs, he made the ſabbath for man. Mar. ii. 27.

BUT ſome tell us, the command for keeping the ſabbath day, was only to the people of Iſrael. It is a pity that men ſhould expoſe their ignorance, and inattention, by ſpeaking things ſo unguarded. The ſabbath was hallowed from the very beginning; when their was no ſuch thing as the nation of Iſrael exiſting. It is true, when the nations of the earth had become vain, ſetting up their own inventions, and following their own imaginations, till by forſaking and deſpiſing, they had loſt the knowledge of the true God; and when God had ſingled out the nation of Iſrael, as a people for himſelf, he did very ſtrongly inforce upon them the keeping of the ſabbath, as a token of his peculiar regard to them; that they might remember that he was their God, and that they were his people. Lev. xix. 3, 30.—xxvi. 2. Deu. v. 12. Ezek. xx. 12. But in the original conſtitution, the ſabbath was no way peculiar to them more than other people; but while they kept the ſabbath from polluting it, it ſhewed that they had not departed from God, as the reſt of the nations had; and by this it appeared that they were his peculiar people, in that they attended to his ordinances, and called them a delight, which all others deſpiſed. And certainly the higher favours the Lord beſtows upon any people, the ſtronger obligations they are under to confeſs his goodneſs, and make a right improvement of the bleſſings; and according to the meaſure of the knowledge of

God that any people are bleſſed with, the ſabbath will in proportion be a delight. So conſequently, the Jews enjoyed a greater bleſſing in the ſabbath, than was compatible with the abject condition of the Gentiles; and to the Chriſtians it is a far higher bleſſing than to the Jews.

BUT ſome tell us, Chriſt abrogated the ſabbath, and tho' the chriſtians keep a day, it is not the ſabbath that they keep; and ſome go ſo far as to deny that we have any commandment for keeping a day. While others affirm, that the true ſabbath can be kept only on the ſeventh day of the week, and that the chriſtians are in a great error, in changing it to the firſt day of the week.

BUT let it be conſidered reſpecting the firſt of theſe; that it was a commandment of the law, given to mankind from the beginning; not of the ceremonial law, but of the law fixed in the very nature of things; which Chriſt did not come to deſtroy, nor was it in his power to abrogate, ſeeing it was his Father's immutable will. Mat. v. 17, 18. It was before the law given by Moſes on Mount Sinai. For in the firſt mention of it to Iſrael, Exod. xvi. 5, 22.—30. It is not ſpoken of as a precept that then commenced, but as a ſtanding ordinance which they knew before. The ceremonial law, Chriſt fulfilled by bringing in the ſubſtance, in the place of the ſhadow. But the immutable law he eſtabliſhed, and performed it himſelf to the laſt punctillio. Nor did he ever violate the ſabbath day; tho' the Jews accuſed him of breaking the ſabbath, but that was only becauſe he did not conform to their ſuperſtitious traditions.

AND reſpecting the ſecond, that we have no commandment for obſerving the ſabbath day; this is an open contradiction

tradiction to the expreſs word of God, which in the ſtricteſt terms enjoins it for ever. It was never left to the precarious will, or wiſdom of men; nor did the Lord leave it to his diſciples, to vary the day at their own diſcretion; but he reſerved power to himſelf, to change the identical day, as he ſhould ſee good, he being Lord of the ſabbath. Luk. vi. 5. Yet a ſeventh day, or a ſabbath in every week remains inviolable. A change of the numerical day by him whoſe right it was, does not diſſolve, or invalidate the virtue of the commandment.

AND reſpecting the third, that it is an error to keep the firſt day of the week, rather than the ſeventh; if the chriſtians have changed it of their own will, it is a glaring inſult upon the great Law-giver. But if the Lord of the ſabbath has himſelf changed it, and has given us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps, then it is no error, but reverence to the Lord of Glory, that we walk in the ſame path. This is then the thing to be enquired into, whether this change is of God or of men; in which enquiry, three things are to be attended to.

I. WHETHER the Son of God (after having avouched his authority, as Lord of the ſabbath) has expreſſed a more peculiar regard to the firſt day of the week, than to any other, or even than the ſeventh day? This it is certain he has done, for this was the day of his reſurrection from the dead, wherein he laid aſide the form of a ſervant, and manifeſted himſelf to be Lord of dead and living. As God reſted from his works of creation on the ſeventh day, and in remembrance whereof, the ſeventh day had been kept hitherto; now Chriſt reſted from his work of redemption on the firſt day: and as this was a work far

more great and glorious, the diſciples of the Lord remember it with abundance more joy and delight. The former gave being to this world, which now thro' ſin, is vaniſhing away. Pſal. cii. 25, 26. But the latter laid the foundation of everlaſting life, never to be deſolved. Heb. xii. 28. The Evangeliſts are very particular in their teſtimony, that it was the firſt day of the week in the end of the ſabbath, when the ſabbath was paſt, that the Lord aroſe; no day was ever ſo honoured before; and it was the ſame day, and noted with a ſpecial emphaſis: *Being the firſt day of the week*. Joh. xx. 19. That he firſt appeared and preached to his diſciples after his reſurrection, pronouncing peace on them, and aſſuring them of the Holy Ghoſt. And though one being abſent and therefore did not believe, yet the Lord did not appear again to convince him, till the days were come about, to the next firſt day of the week, Joh. xx. 26. And the moſt glorious opening of the Heavens that ever came upon the ſons of men, was on the ſame day of the week, That is, the firſt pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, on the day of Pentecoſt: as all know, who know the meaning of that time, that it was the firſt day of the week, or the morrow after the ſabbath. Lev. xxiii. 11, 15, 16.

As for the time of the Lord's appearing to his diſciples, in the mountain in Galilee, and the time when he was taken up into Heaven, the preciſe days are not mentioned. And tho' there may be great reaſon to conceive, that they both were on the firſt day of the week, we are not to urge what we cannot maintain. As to his aſcenſion, Luke tells us he was, *ſeen of them forty days*. But this does not make it certain, that he aſcended on the preciſe fortieth day; it being very common in ſcripture (where preciſion is not required)

required) to mention an even number without taking notice of the units: So there can be no certainty that it was no more than forty days. And it looks very probable that his aſcenſion might be on the firſt day of the week; for the diſciples made it a ſabbath. Act i, 12, 13, 14. The Popiſh ſuperſtition of fixing the coming of the Holy Ghoſt, ſuch a number of days after the aſcenſion of the Lord is an idle fiction: The paſſover was fixed by the moon, and Pentecoſt was regulated by the ripening of the corn; and had no connexion or certainty of diſtance, one from another: but might be nearer or further off, by a number of weeks, one year than another. The day that the Lord aſcended, he aſſured his diſciples they ſhould be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, *not many days hence*. But how many thoſe days were, no man now living knows. But it is plain that the Lord opened the laſt viſion, ſent his laſt meſſage from Heaven, and finiſhed all propheſy, on the firſt day of the week. Rev. i. 10. John calls it the Lord's day: which can convey to us no other idea, but the day which the Lord had peculiarly honoured, by his victory over all enemies, and coming down in the richeſt of all bleſſings. And ſince the ſpirit was pleaſed to particularize the day in which he communicated ſuch bleſſings and myſteries to his ſervant; it plainly appears to be a directory to us to wait for the like bleſſings on that holy day.

2. Did the Apoſtles follow the example of their Lord, in ſhewing a peculiar regard to the firſt day of the week? It is plain they did. For at Troas the diſciples came together to break bread on the firſt day of the week: when Paul and his companions aſſembled with them. Act xx, 7. And by the manner it is expreſſed it does not appear as a thing accidental; but as their uſual practice; and

we never find a note put upon any other day among the diſciples. And Paul gave direction to the churches, both in Aſia and in Europe, reſpecting the collection for the ſaints, that it ſhould be done on the firſt day of the week. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. which makes it undeniable that they paid a peculiar regard to that day; and that it was the day on which they uſed to aſſemble to worſhip the Lord, and to wait for the bleſſings of his ſpirit.

3. Is the firſt day of the week more adapted to the true intention of a ſabbath or day of reſt to the Lord, than the ſeventh? To this it may be replied, that one day, or portion of time in it's own nature, cannot be more holy than another; only according to the directions given us of the Lord, for what intent it is to be kept. As it may be in commemoration of ſuch events as may tend to inſpire us with holy principles. Doubtleſs the ſeventh day, during the former diſpenſation, kept in remembrance of the finiſhing of the work of Creation, was beſt adapted to excite in the minds of mankind, principles of love and gratitude to the God of all goodneſs, for all his rich bleſſings of nature; to raiſe their minds into a devout contemplation of the majeſty and glory, of the all wiſe, and all powerful Creator. To admire, adore, and magnify the divine perfection; in all the comforts which we partake of, and all the excellencies which our eyes behold; or all that our minds are capable of conceiving of in the univerſal creation; that we may glorify him as God, and not become vain in our imaginations. Rom. i. 20, 21. But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour, toward man appeared in bringing life and immortality to light by Jeſus Chriſt. Opening the Heavenly glories in Emmanuel the Son of his love. The brightneſs of his glo-

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ry, and giving him to be the head over all things to his church; this is a work which far more exceeds in glory; in comparison whereof, the work of creation was only as a hand-maid. Therefore now, the keeping of the first day of the week in remembrance of this more glorious event, is much more adapted to them that believe in Jesus; to give true rest to their souls. In contemplating the breadth and length and depth, and heighth of the boundless love of God; the fullness of grace in the Holy One; the power of the Holy Ghost, and the glories of the world to come. That in beholding, they may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. But if any man does not believe on the son of God, he will naturally reject his authority in this glorious change of the sabbath of rest. But let him remember, that so long as he is a living man, he is under an indispensible obligation to keep a sabbath to the Lord. Let him therefore, strictly keep the seventh day, till it shall be the good pleasure of the Lord more clearly to open his eyes.

THE believer beholds a great glory in this day; not only as it gives him opportunity to contemplate the riches of glorious grace, and hold spiritual communion with his God, through Christ; but as it is a bright figure, or resemblance of the glories of the kingdom of God. The ancient sabbath was a sign to the children of Israel that the Lord was their God: and of the good things which he would grant them in the gospel, whereby he would sanctify them to himself. Exod. xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12, 20. The present sabbath is a glorious sign to the believers of their fellowship with Christ in things already come. The rest of delight which God takes in Christ and his church. Zeph. iii. 17. The rest of Christ from all suf-

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fering and ſorrow, which he ſuſtained for our redemption. Joh. xix. 30. Act. ii. 24. The glorious reſt, which the goſpel gives to the world. Iſai. xi. 10. The humble ſoul reſting from ſin and ſorrow. Mat. xi. 28, 29. 1 Pet iv. 2. The believer reſting from his own works. Heb. iv. 10. The ſoul filled with the holy ſpirit reſting in divine comfort. Joh. xvi. 22. Rom. xiv. 17. And the univerſal reſt which the everlaſting goſpel ſhall give to the world, when the power and glory thereof ſhall overſpread the whole earth. Iſai. xi. 9.—61. 11. Hab. ii. xiv.

THE ſaints, in celebrating the ſabbath of the Lord, or the *Lord's day*, make confeſſion of the majeſty, glory, and dominion of the Son of God, whoſe power is equal to that of the Father; and being ſovereign lord of the ſabbath, hath changed the day to a more excellent purpoſe. In this they confeſs the reſurrection of the Lord of glory. In this, they confeſs the opening of his glorious commiſſion to his apoſtles, to ſpread the glad tidings of reſt to all the world. In this, they confeſs the fulfilling of the promiſe of the Father, in ſending down the Holy Ghoſt. In this, they confeſs the completion of all viſion and propheſy; and that all the wiſdom of God is clearly opened, ſo far as is compatible with a ſtate of mortality; or that is poſſible to be made known to us, while in this earthly tabernacle. For, on the firſt day of the week, all theſe things were performed. And in this, they alſo confeſs their unſhaken hope; that when the ſorrows and toils of this preſent life ſhall be expired, and after the world has enjoyed the true ſubſtantial ſeventh-day-ſabbath of univerſal reſt and peace, through the riches of the glory of the everlaſting goſpel. Pſal. lxxii. 7. Iſai. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3, 4. That in the end of that ſabbath, the Lord will come in his

his glory, to introduce the true first-day-sabbath, or the glory of the world to come: in the glorious resurrection.

And with these views, the children of light sanctify this Holy day. Blessing, praising, magnifying, admiring, adoring, exalting, extolling, and giving thanks to the father of lights; for all his blessings, manifest in the son of his love, and depending on his promises to dwell among them; they wait for the fulfilling thereof. In guiding their understandings into the deep things of the kingdom of God; in establishing their hearts in the faith of Jesus; in shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts by the Holy Ghost; in uniting their souls to himself, in deep humility, reverence, and godly fear; in directing them into the knowledge and practice of all his commandments; and instructing them into every thing that may be for the glory of God, and the edification of their own souls; as well as for the benefit of his church. They continue waiting on him who was manifested to take away our sins, to accomplish the extirpation of sin, out of their souls. And on him in whom it pleased the father that all fullness should dwell, to enrich their souls with all spiritual blessings. And on him who is gone into heaven, to prepare a place for them; to prepare them for that place, to hasten the time of his coming, and receive them to himself. Thus, in keeping his holy day, they confess the Lord of glory, as their All in all; in things past, present, and to come. *This is the day which the Lord hath made.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 4, Line 8 *for* verſe 3 *read* 11.
8, 8 *for* ſoul *read* ſaint.
36, 1 *for* woſoever *read* whoſoever.
112, 14 *for* lord *read* Lord.

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